SRI RAMANUJACHARYA

A SKETCH OF

HIS LIFE AND TIMES

BY

S. KRISHNASWAMI AIYANGAR, M.A.

HIS PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEM

BY

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WITH AN ACCOUNT OF

RAMANUJA AND VAISHNAVISM

BY

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THIS is a companion volume to the sketches of Sri-Sankaracharya and Sri-Madhwacharya which we have already issued. The book consists of three parts; in the first, Mr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, M.A., M.R.A.S., gives an account of Sri-Ramanuja's "Life and Times," while in the second, Mr. T. Rajagopalachariar, M.A., B.L., gives a succinct exposition of Sri-Ramanuja's Visishtadwaita Philosophy. In the ird, Professor M. Rangachariar, M.A., describes the ition occupied by Ramanuja in relation to the pr- ess and development of *Vaishnavism*.

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Sri Ramanujacharya

HIS LIFE AND TIMES

BY

MR. S. KRISHNASWAMI AIYANGAR, M.A., M.R.A.S.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF SOUTH INDIAN HISTORY.

TO the religious history of India, the contributions that the Southern half has had to make have been many. The South generally enjoyed more peaceful development and was long out of the convulsions that threw the North into confusion, and all the internal revolutions and external attacks sent out the pulse of the impact almost spent out to the South. This has been of great advantage and it is precisely in the dark ages of the North, that often intervened brighter epochs, that the South sent out its light to redeem the darkness.

SOUTH INDIAN CONTRIBUTION TO RELIGIONS IN INDIA.

This general character of the history of the North of India from the first centuries of the Christian era onwards makes a continuous history impossible on certain lines; while in the South during this period, there has been a continuity of development amidst all the din and clang of war and dynastic revolutions. Our concern here is about the Vaishnava movement and this

has had a continuous history almost from the beginning of the Christian era.

MIS-IMPRESSIONS REGARDING RAMANUJA.

There has been considerable mis-impression that the Vaishnava movement originated in Ramanuja and all those that claim to be Vaishnavas (not including the disciples of Madhwa who are Vaishnava in a narrower sense) both in the North and the South can trace their particular form of Vedanta no earlier than Ramanuja. On the basis of this mis-impression, theories have been built up time and again that the characteristic features of the special teachings of Ramanuja have been borrowed from Christianity. The latest exponent of this theory is Dr. Grieson, though he would make a considerable distinction between the Vaishnavas of modern times and those of the older, and perhaps, set those of the North against the South. This no doubt is an error which arises from not giving due weight to the indebtedness of Ramanuja to those Tamil saints that had gone before him long ere he came into the world. The hypothesis would be untenable unless it could be proved that all these Tamil saints could be shown also to have visited the Christian shrine at Mylapore or elsewhere. Besides, even from the point of view of Sanskrit Vaishnavaism, it cannot be said to have been proven that the peculiar features of Ramanuja-Vaishnavaism is not traceable to earlier works and teachers. Hence a life of Ramanuja based on historical material alone and free from the legends that have gathered round it, as time wore off, would be

of great advantage to clear away the wrong impressions that prevail regarding his life and teaching.

THE SPECIAL PERIOD OF RAMANUJA'S ADVENT.

That Ramanuja should have appeared in the eleventh century is quite as much of the mission getting the man as the advent of the Buddha in the sixth century before Christ. This century in the south of India was characterised by considerable religious ferment. It was then that each religious sect among the people felt the need for formulating a creed of its own and placing itself in a regularly organised religious body so as to be able to hold its own in the midst of the disintegrating influences that gained dominance in society. That Ramanuja appeared and did what is ascribed to him is just in the fitness of things, having regard to the circumstances of the times.

PREDECESSORS OF RAMANUJA.

(*a*) THE ALVARS.

There have been a succession of devotees called in Vaishnava parlance Alvars in contradistinction to a similar Saiva group called Adiyars. These two classes had considerable similarity with characteristic distinctions. They both laid stress on the doctrine of Bhakti as a means to the attainment of salvation, the one through Vishnu and the other through Siva. The Vaishnava tradition names twelve of the Alvars while the Saiva saints number sixty-three. The Tamil works of the former including a centum upon Ramanuja himself, constitute the Prabhandum 4,000, while those of the Saivas constitute a vaster collection of Tevarams, &c.

The twelve Alvars are in the traditional order:

I	1.	Poygai Alvar.
	2.	Bhutathu Alvar.
	3.	Pey Alvar.
II	4.	Tirumalisai Alvar.
III	5.	Nammalvar.
	6.	Madhurakavi Alvar.
IV	7.	Kulasekharalvar.
V	8.	Periyalvar.
	9.	Andal.
VI	10.	Tindaradippodi Alvar.
	11.	Tiruppanalvar.
	12.	Tirumangai Alvar.

The actual dates ascribed by the hagiologists to these Alvars would not bear scrutiny, but the order in which they are mentioned is substantially correct. In order of importance, Nammalvar stands first, and it is his work that has the distinctive appellation Tiruvoymoli —"the word of the mouth." They were all regarded by the generations that succeeded them, as manifestations of divine wisdom to redeem the world from the rilous plights to which it had brought itself.

(b) THE ACHARYAS.

The next group that followed, as the hagiologists would have us believe, in unbroken succession, is known as Acharyas (or preceptors) not so near to the divine, but still raised above the ordinary man of the world by much. This orthodox successions of apostles include six names before Ramanuja, of which the two most important are Nathamuni and his grand-son

Alavandar. The great grand-son of this latter through one of his grand-daughters was Ramanuja.

PARENTAGE AND BIRTH OF RAMANUJA.

While Alavandar was still in occupation of the apostolic seat of the Vaishnavas at Srirangam, one of his grandsons requested permission of him to go and devote himself to the service of God on the Tirupathi Hill. The permission was graciously accorded and the young man went and settled there with his venerable father and two younger sisters. While there, two young men wishing to enter life as house-holders happened to go to the holy place and sought each the hand of one of the sisters. Of these two Asuri Kesava Bhattar of Sri Perumbuthur wedded the elder, while Kamalnayana Bhattar of Malalaimangalam accepted the younger of the girls. Of the first pair in course of time was born a boy (in 1017 A. D.) whom the maternal uncle named Lakshmana (otherwise Ramanuja or in Tamil, Ilaya Perumal.)

EARLY LIFE OF RAMANUJA.

Of the childhood of Ramanuja, as of others in similar positions of life, very little is known. There appears to have been nothing extraordinary in his career except that he appears to have lost his father while young. He received the kind of education ordinarily given to boys of his class and age along with his cousin, (mother's sister's son) Govinda Bhattar, as he was called. The two young men had advanced sufficiently to seek a teacher in the Vedanta to instruct them. They went to a teacher of reputation holding

his classes in Conjeevaram and this change marks the turning point in the career of the young men.

RAMANUJA AND YADAVAPRAKASA.

Under Yadavaprakasa then the two cousins Ramanuja and Govina Bhattar were both studying the Vedanta assiduously. The former made such progress and his great-grandfather at Srirangam had heard such good reports of his remarkable advance, that he travelled all the way *incognito* to see the young man. This he did in the Deva Raja Shrine at Conjeevaram. Gratified with the look of the young man, he went back hoping that he might soon transfer the mantle of office to the youth of great promise that he just saw. He did not wish to speak to Ramanuja lest it should attract attention and disturb Ramanuja's studies in any way. Ramanuja went on with his studies yet a while, when he began to feel that at times Yadavaprakasa's interpretations of Vedic passages were not quite up to his satisfaction. On one occasion, he even went the length of offering an explanation of his own which struck those about, as more satisfactory than that of his master. This led to grave differences between master and disciple. Matters advanced a step further when at the invitation of the ruler of the place, Yadavaprakasa failed in an attempt at exorcising. The princess was possessed and the spirit declined to move at Yadava's bidding. It would, however, go away if it were Ramanuja's pleasure that it should. Ramanuja was pleased to give the order and the ghost was raised. This made Yadava more jealous of his pupil and the crisis was

reached when interpreting another Upanishad ; Yadava again rendered the passage in a somewhat absurdly dis-respectful manner. Ramanuja showed positive dis-approval of what he considered a purposeful distortion of the texts. Yadavaprakasa asked Ramanuja to leave his academy, but was advised to get rid of Ramanuja altogether.

ATTEMPT AT ASSASSINATION OF RAMANUJA.

At the instigation of some of his disciples Yadava organised a pilgrimage to Benares, and Ramanuja and his cousin were among the party. The latter having been more docile stood in high favour with the master and was in the secrets of the plot to assassinate Rama-nuja. It was arranged to kill him in the depths of the forests, perhaps not very far from Kanchi. Information of this was given to Ramanuja in time and he escaped at dead of night, and journeyed back to Kanchi under the guidance of a kind hunter and huntress. At daybreak the latter asked for a little water and when Ramanuja got down a well to fetch her some, the pair disappeared. Ramanuja had not to travel much farther before he came in sight of the spires of the great tmeple at Kanchi.

RAMANUJA'S RETURN AFTER ESCAPE.

Having reached Kanchi and intimated to his mother of what had happened and how he escaped death by divine intervention, he settled down as a householder at the instance of his mother, and devoted himself to the service of God Devaraja at Kanchi. Alavandar was drawing near his end in the meanwhile,

and those about him despatched the eldest among his disciples to go and bring Ramanuja to Srirangam. Periyanambi, as this emissary was called, arrived at Kanchi and stood reciting one of the beautiful verses in praise of God (the Stotraratna) composed by his master Alavandar. Ramanuja's attention was drawn to the slokas (verses) in spite of his single-minded devotion to his preparation for the morning service. Turning round he asked the stranger who the composer of the piece was. Periyanambi answered it was his great master Alavandar. The next question was necessarily, whether he could see him. "If you would go with me now," said Periyanambi, "I will take you to him." Ramanuja hurried through his morning service and started with Periyanambi, having obtained permission of Devaraja for the journey.

RAMANUJA'S FIRST JOURNEY TO SRIRANGAM TO VISIT ALAVANDAR.

They journeyed along till they reached the northern side of Srirangam when at a distance Ramanuja descried a group of men on the south bank of the Koleroon River. Approaching closer Periyanambi and his younger companion discovered that Alavandar was no more and the group consisted of his disciples, came there with the remains of the departed great one for its final disposal. Remanuja was taken close to the body to take a first and final look at the great master, when lo! he saw three out of the five fingers of the right hand folded. Struck with this, he enquired whether the effect was noticed in life and the answer

came that the defect was not physical and was not noticed in life. On further enquiry Ramanuja was told that the master had three of his cherished objects unfulfilled, namely, an easily-read and understood commentary upon the Brahmasutra; the giving of the names of Parasara and Shadagopa to suitable persons that would make these names live among the people. Ramanuja promised to see these fulfilled and the fingers straightened. Ramanuja waited for the funeral ceremonies to be completed and returned to Kanchi to resume his duties of devotion to God.

RETURN OF RAMANUJA TO KANCHI AND THE MISSSON OF HIS FUTURE.

Days having passed, in his usual round of service Ramanuja feft that time was passing without any attempt on his part to perform what he had promised to do. Not knowing what exactly to do, he appealed to the elderly priest of God Devaraja and wished that he might ascertain the divine will regarding his own future. Tirukkachchinambi as the priest was called, gave out the will of God, in the matter, in the following sloka:

"Sreman param tatvam aham, matam me bhedaha, prapattirnirapaya hetuhu,

Navasyakicha smriti, hiantyakale mokshaha, mahapurnaha iha aryavaryaha."

"I am the supreme, my conviction is distinction, devotion is the unfailing cause of salvation, conscious volition not essential, release in the end; at present Periyanambi is the highest preceptor."

In these six phrases was Ramanuja given the direction for his future work, whether the actual direction came from within himself or from without or those about. He was to pin his faith to God and work out the qualified monastic system of Indian philosophy accepting Periyanambi for his initiation, and teaching the doctrines of devotion to God whose self-imposed duty it is to give salvation even without the conscious volition of the person wishing it. Ramanuja felt the call and with the permission of Devaraja, accorded through his priest, he started towards Srirangam.

RAMANUJA'S INITIATION UNDER PERIYANAMBI.

He halted at Madhurantakam to pay his homage of worship to the God Rama in the temple there on the tank bund; and while in the act, he saw Periyanambi who was on his way to Kanchi. They both enquired of each other the puropse of his journey and found that each had in a way come to the end of it. Ramanuja found the Guru (preceptor) he sought, while Periyanambi's object was to take Ramanuja to Srirangam. In fact he had been sent on that special mission by the disciples of first degree of the late master Alavandar. At Ramanuja's importunate entreaty Nambi initiated him into the mysteries of the hidden lore of the Vedanta of those times, in presence of God Rama in the temple. Both Nambi and Ramanuja returned to Kanchi; master and disciple together lived there for some time. But their separation came soon and gave a turn to the whole career of Ramanuja.

CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO RAMANUJA'S RENUNCIATION.

Nambi and Ramanuja took up lodgings together and the two families were living amicably together for some time. Ramanuja, however, does not appear to have been very happy in the choice of his wife. He did not find in her that ready sympathy and compliance to his own wishes he expected of her. On one occasion he had invited Tirukachchinambi to his hous and the two were seated and conversed together for a while. When the former went away Ramanuja's wife quickly washed the seat occupied by him, the temple-priest having been of a slightly inferior status in point of caste. Ramanuja felt agrieved and overlooked this offence with an admonition. Again one morning while he was still by the accustomed well preparing for the morning service at the temple, a poor man asked him for food. He directed him home with instructions to demand food of Ramanuja's wife with the husband's permission. She said there was none available. The man returned intimating Ramanuja of how he fared. Ramanuja's enquiry on returning home proved that there was some food which might have been given to the person. Again he excused her. But the third offence proved the last straw, and was the most serious of all in Ramanuja's estimation. Ramanuja's wife and Periyanambi's both of them went to the same well to fetch water. It would appear that through the latter's carelessness some water from her vessel dropped into that of the other. This naturally led to some alterca-

tion in which the relative claims of the two families were rather too freely discussed by Ramanuja's wife. The other lady reported the matter to her husband, who rather than offend the good man quitely broke up establishment and returned to Srirangam.

RAMANUJA'S RENUNCIATION.

Ramanuja soon found out the cause of Nambi's unceremonious departure and resolved that the time had come for separating from his wife. He took advantage of an invitation from his father-in-law to send his wife away and without further delay assumed the brown robes of a *sannyasi* (he that has renounced the world). This step at once added to the rising reputation of Ramanuja, and disciples began to gather round him. It was now that disciples first appear round Yathiraja (king of hermits,) as he came to be called. It was probably now also that the question assumed importance whether a *sannyasi* should be of the Ekadandi or Tridandi (single rod or triple rod, as the symbol of office). The Vaishnava version has it that Yadavaprakasa, his late master, became a convert to Ramanuja under the name, Govindayogi and wrote the work *Yatidharma Samuchchayam*. (The enquiry into the rules of conduct of a hermit.)

RAMANUJA SETTLES DOWN AT SRIRANGAM AND PREPARES HIMSELF TO FULLFIL HIS MISSION.

While Ramanuja was making progress in this manner the disciples of Alavandar at Srirangam wished to get him to live in their midst, and occupy the seat

of their late master which had remained unoccupied for lack of a suitable successor. This time they sent another of Alavandar's immediate disciples, his own son, by name Tiruvarangapperumal Ariyar. Ramanuja followed the Ariyar and settled down at Srirangam. It was now that he set about seriously to acquire the qualifications which alone would justify his accession to the high position to which he was looked upon by the public as the most worthy candidate. He had, therefore, to get himself initiated in every department of learning and philosophy which then constituted the Vaishnava lore. Periyanambi having become his *guru* (preceptor) in one part, he had to seek initiation of Tirukottiyurnambi for another (manthrartham). He went six times in succession and on all these occasions the master was not satisfied with the earnestness of the disciple and declined to open his mind. Ramanuja in despondency thought of giving up the business when he was asked to try another time. He succeeded in inducing the great one to unlock his secrets, after the customary promise not to publish except to a worthy disciple previously tried. Ramanuja agreed and found the secrets of such efficacy for salvation that he taught all about him what he learnt. The guru summoned the disciple to his presence and asked him how it was that he so flagrantly transgressed the injunctions of his master. Ramanuja begged to be prescribed the punishment and the *guru* replied that the punishment would be 'eternal hell' hereafter, but nothing here, Ramanuja replied

with characteristic beneficence that he would gladly suffer 'hell' himself, if by so doing he was instrumental in ministering to the attainment of salvation to the suffering millions of humanity. The master appreciated the spirit of the disciple's transgression and said that the particular *darsana* (section of Vedanta) might hereafter be known 'Ramanuja darsana.'

CONVERSION OF RAMANUJA'S COUSIN.

At this period Ramanuja had to intervene in the affairs of his cousin and companion at school, Govinda Bhattar. This young man had continued his journey along with Yadavaprakasa to the Ganges. It would appear that while he bathed in the holy waters of the river, a 'phallic emblem' struck to the palm of his hand. Hence the name Ullangai Gonarndanayanar. Ever since, he had become a staunch Saivite and had taken residence at Kalahasti not far from his maternal uncle at Tirupathi. At Ramanuja's request the uncle met the nephew and brought him back to allegiance to the Vaishnava persuasion under the new sacerdotal designation of Embar. Ramanuja's name had begun to attract attention and he felt that he should still acquire other qualifications before becoming every way the head of a 'darsana.'

RAMANUJA COMPLETES HIS QUALIFICATIONS.

He began his studies in Tiruvoymoli first under Tiruvarangapperumal Ariyar and then under Tirumalaiyandan. While with the latter, he had occasion to show his special acuteness of intellect in suggesting special interpretations of important texts, which on

further discussions were found to have been in full agreement with the views of Alavandar. This new acquisition completed his round of qualifications and he had become in fact a successor of Alavandar in every sense of the term.

A SECOND ATTEMPT ON RAMANUJA'S LIFE.

Ramanuja's fame had spread so wide and he came to be known so well that his little cousin at Tirupathi (son of his maternal uncle) evinced a precocious desire to attach himself to Ramanuja. The father sent the boy in charge of a nephew of his own and the two arrived at Srirangam when Ramanuja's life had been saved by the unlooked for intervention of a good woman. Ramanuja, as a *sannyasi* had to go round at mid-day from house to house for food. One of the householders had instructed his wife to poison the food and serve it to him. The woman felt compelled to obey the husband, but on giving the handful to Ramanuja, could not bear the feeling that the good man would die of the food. She, therefore, prostrated before him while getting back into the house. It is recognised as a rule of practice that when a *sannyasi* goes out for alms (biksha), no one should make the usual salutation. This strange conduct on the part of the lady struck Ramanuja and he suspected foul play. On examination the poisoning was discovered and ever after it was arranged that the elder of the two new arrivals should under take the food-supply of Ramanuja. In spite of this attempt at assassination, all had so far gone smoothly; and the life of Ramanuja

becomes stormy hereafter. His fame had spread far and the few prominent conversions attracted attention. Whether he wished it or no, he had to make his position good against all comers and had to assume the role of a controversialist.

CONTROVERSY WITH YEGNAMURTI.

At this time there arrived at Srirangam an advaitic *sannyasi* by name Yegnamurti, in the course of a controversial tour through India. There began between the two a great disputation regarding the relative superiority of their respective creeds. For sixteen days they went on with no decisive result either way and Ramanuja was somewhat anxious about his own position, when it struck him that he might derive some help from Alavandar's works. He referred to the latter's Mayavadakandanam (a refutation of the idealistic theory.) Thus armed he overcame his adversary on the seventeenth day and as a result, enlisted his rival among his followers under the Vaishnava designation of Arulalapperumal Emberumanar.

RAMANUJA'S FULFILMENT OF HIS FIRST PROMISE.

Sometime after Ramanuja felt that he might conveniently pay the long wished-for visit to his uncle, who sent word through his nephew that he very much wished to see him. Ramanuja then set forward to Tirupathi, one of the three 'holy of holies' of the Sri Vaishnavas. He stayed there a year receiving instruction in the Ramayana from his maternal uncle there, who at the end of the period made over to him his two sons. His preparations were now complete and as he

was growing old, he set about fulfilling his undertaking to Alavandar. The first of his three promises was the writing out of such a commentary for the Brahmasutra as would embody the views of the qualified monistic school of thought. It was absolutely essential for a due performance of this work that he should acquaint himself with the previous commentators, particularly of the Bodhayanavritti. This naturally was not easy of acquisition for one of his intentions explicit and implied. He had to go about much before he found access to a library in the North, containing the work, where he was allowed just to read it through. He felt that it was not enough when a quick disciple among his followers came to his rescue by saying that he had completely mastered the work and could give references whenever wanted. This was one among his first disciples, who lived to render yet greater services to his master. With the help of Kurathalvar—for such was the name of this stout-hearted and quick-minded disciple Ramanuja wrote out the three works, the essence of the Vedanta (Vedantasaram), a resume of the Vedanta (Vedanta Sangraham), the light of the Vedanta (Vedantadipam). He also wrote, or rather gave out, the commentaries on the Brahmasutra and Bhagavatgita. This list of works redeemed Ramanuja from his first promise.

RAMANUJA SECURES THE APPROVAL OF THE LEARNED FOR HIS BHASHYA.

But these must be accepted before Ramanuja could feel he had done his duty to his master. He

had, therefore, to start on a tour to different places to secure the approval of the learned. This tour naturally took him to the great seat of learning, Kashmir. There at Sarasvatipita (the seat of learning) he read through the work in an assembly of philosophers and obtained from them the approval of no less an authority than "Sarasvati" herself. As a token of her approval she presented Ramanuja with the image of Hayagriva (horse-necked, an aspect of Vishnu) and said that his commentary might thereafter be known Sri Bhashya (*the* commentary). It is because of this distinction that among his disciples Ramanuja is known Bhashyakarar (maker of the Bhashya). The image of Hayagriva has come down to the present generation and is believed to be that which is the object of worship at the Parakalamutt at Mysore.

RAMANUJA SETTLES SAIVA-VAISHNAVA DISPUTE AT TIRUPATHI.

Returning from the North he had to pass by way of Tirupathi where matters had assumed a serious aspect on a dispute as to the nature of the deity there. The Saivas claimed the shrine to be that of God Subrahmaniya while the Vaishnavas claimed it as that of Vishnu. The matter had, therefore, to be settled one way or the other and they agreed to leave the decision to the God himself. It was arranged that one evening both parties should assemble and lock up the *sanctum sanctorum* having placed the weapons peculiar to each deity. The shrine was to be that of Vishnu or Siva according as the one set or the other was as-

sumed by God. It was found the next morning that the image had assumed the disc and conch characteristic of Vishnu, and ever after the shrine appears to have been taken to be that of Vishnu. Having settled this dispute Ramanuja returned to Srirangam and set about arranging matters for getting through the remaining items of work he had undertaken.

RAMANUJA FULFILS THE SECOND DESIDERATUM. SAHASRANAMA BHASHYA.

Ramanuja's foremost disciple Kurathalvar was for long childless. One night it would appear he had to go to bed without food having had to fast the whole day for lack of provisions. The bell in the great temple pealed indicating that the night-worship was going on. The devoted wife thought to herself that it was hardly fair that God Ranganatha should accept regular worship when the staunchest of his devotees lay starving. Soon after the temple priests brought a supply of food from the temple and knocked at the door of Kurathalvar. The wife opened the door and delighted with the arrival of food, woke up the restless husband and fed him. As the direct outcome of this divine favour, she soon became mother of two sons to one of whom at the instance of Ramanuja, the name Parasara was given. This boy had grown up to man's state when Ramanuja was looking out for some one through whom he might fulfil the second object. This young man Parasara Bhatta was commissioned to write a commentary on the *Sahasranama* (the thousand

names of Vishnu). This work of Parasara Bhatta fulfilled the second of the desiderata of Alavandar.

PILLAN'S 6000 COMMENTARY ON THE TIRUVOYMOLI.

FULFILMENT OF THE THIRD DESIDERATUM.

There then remained the means of perpetuating the name of Nammalvar, the author of the Tiruvoymoli. Ramanuja was perhaps thinking of a commentary himself. It would appear he was contemplating within a closed room a particular verse of the work attempting to realize its full significance when his cousin looked through a chink in the door. The young man, Pillan by name, forthwith put the question whether the master was pondering the verse referring to the God at Tirumalirunjola. Ramanuja was struck with the acuteness of the young man, and commissioned him to write out the 6000 commentary on the Tiruvoymoli, giving him the name Tirukkuruhaippiran Pillan, the first part of which being one of the many surnames of Nammalvar. This brought the third of Alavandar's desiderata to fulfilment. Ramanuja could now feel his mission at an end and settle down to a life of quiet teaching. This way perhaps years rolled by.

THE CHOLA PERSECUTION AND ESCAPE OF RAMANUJA.

He was not, however, altogether unmolested. Perhaps a change of ruler or a change in his surroundings brought about a change in the spirit of complete tolerance that as a rule characterised the administration. Be the cause what it may, the Chola ruler for the time being, often given the name Kulothunga, took it into his head to demand assent to the doctrine,

"Sivat parataram nasti." "There is no being (God) superior to Siva." This seems to have been aimed particularly against the Ramanuja propagandists, perhaps because of a few prominent conversions. This challenge was openly thrown out, and naturally enough everybody pointed to Ramanuja as the person whose assent ought to be obtained. Ramanuja was summoned to appear in the royal presence.

Ramanuja's friends feared danger, and to avoid it Kurathalvar undertook to personate Ramanuja. Assuming the robes of the *sannyasi*, Kurathalvar went along with the venerable Periyanambi to the the Chola Court, while Ramanuja assuming the dress of a house-holder and at the head of a small body of adherents betook himself to the kingdom of the Hoysala Bitti Deva. Travelling along the banks of the Kaveri Ramanuja settled down at Saligram where he lived for a period of 12 years. While here Bitti Deva was just carving out for himself a kingdom along the southern marches of the Chalukya kingdom of Vikramaditya and the Chola frontier in the north-west.

CONVERSION OF BITTI DEVA.

A daughter of the king was possessed and after failing in all other attempts at exorcism Ramanuja's aid was called in. Sure enough the ghost was raised and Bitti Deva agreed to become the disciple of Ramanuja. This could not, however, be without overcoming the Jains in controversy, as the king is reputed to have been a Jain. Ramanuja had the best of it in the disputation and the bulk of the Jains either embraced the

Ramanuja *darsana* or were ordered to be ground down in oil mills. This latter threat, however, was not carried into effect through the intervention of Ramanuja. Ramanuja returned to Saligram.

DISCOVERY AND CONSECRATION OF THE MELLKOTE TEMPLE.

It was while here that Ramanuja's stock of *namam* (*the white earth which serves for the Vaishnava caste* mark on the forehead) ran out of stock and Ramanuja was much concerned. He dreamt overnight that there was a hill of that material, not far from Tondanur, where he made the acquaintance with Bitti Deva. *Following the clue he obtained in* his dream, and through the good offices of Vitala Deva (Bitti Deva) Ramanuja got the spot marked out is his dream dug up; when lo! there appeared beneath a small shrine. He then got is consecrated as Tirunarainapuram (Melukote of the maps). Thinking of a suitable image for this shrine, he dreamt of the image of Ramaprya which was at Delhi in possession of the daughter of the ruler at the time. He had to undertake a journey to Northern India again. Having got possession of the image somewhat miraculously, he returned with it. As the princess proved inconsolable without her pet image, the (king whoever he was) sent a party of men to bring back Ramanuja, who found shelter in a Panchama village. It is out of gratitude for this protection that he ordained the admission of the latter into the temple on the car festival. The consecration of the image and the completion of the temple are placed in 1021 Saka

or 1099 A.D., which appears to antidate the event much. He had to make good his position here again as against everybody else, and held a successful disputation against the Bauddhas of Padmagiri (Sravana Belgola). He then resided at Tirunarainapuram expecting news from the South.

RAMANUJA RETURNS TO SRIRANGAM.

While Ramanuja was busy doing the important things detailed above, Kurathalvar and Periyanambi went to the Chola court in obedience to the royal summons. There the question was put to them whether they subscribed to the statement *Sivat Parataram Nasti!* Kurathalvar subscribed with a reservation *Dronamasti Tatahaparam.* "There is Drona above Siva"! taking Siva in the sense of a measure, Drona being a bigger measure. For this impertinence the angry king ordered the putting out of the eyes of the two Vaishnavas. Periyanambi, a venerable old man, died on the way; but the sturdier Kurathalvar, nothing daunted, returned and lived at Srirangam. After a time the Chola ruler died of a carbuncle, which the Vaishnavas put down to be the result of the ruler's cruelty to the devoted adherents of Ramanuja. News of the death of the Chola was taken to Ramanuja by the messenger whom he had sent to condole with Kurathalvar in his misfortune. On receipt of this somewhat assuring news, Ramanuja made up his mind to return.

ORGANISATION OF THE ADHYAYANOTSAVA AND THE COLLECTION OF THE PRABANDHA.

Consoling his beneficent disciple as best he could,

Ramanuja had to set about arranging matters for the *Adhyayanotsava* (an annual festival for the recitation of the works of the Tamil Saints) for which it was the practice to fetch the image of Nammalvar from Alvar Tirunagari in the Tinnevelly District. This having been a year of heavy rainfall it was found impossible to bring the image of the Alvar all the way. Ramanuja in consequence consecrated a shrine and restored the image of the Alvar in Srirangam itself, so that no similar difficulty might be experienced for the future. It was on the occasion of this festive celebration that one of the disciples of Kurathalvar dedicated the centum in honour of Ramanuja on the model of the decad of Madhurakavi on Nammalvar. Amudan of Arangam the author of the centum, it would appear, was the Smartha manager of the temple at Sirangam, and had been not over accommodating to the Vaishnava apostle or his disciples. When his old mother was drawing near her end, the son dutifully enquired if she desired anything he might do for her. She wished that either Ramanuja himself or one of his nominees might be invited to accept food of him on the occasion of her funeral ceremonies. Amudan had no alternative but to make the request of Ramanuja, who advised that his indomitable disciple Kurathalvar might be asked. The latter accepted the invitation and demanded for satisfaction the keys of the temple which Amudan surrendered and became hence-forward the disciple of Kurathalvar. This Amudan in his new-born zeal composed the centum

and begged hard that it might be accepted. Ramanuja accepted the dedication and permitted its inclusion in the prabandha 4000 at the earnest pleadings of his first disciples. Having made provision for the regular annual recital of this 4000, Ramanuja got images of the Alvars and Andal set up in Srirangam and other important places, where also similar annual celebrations were ordained.

CONSECRATION OF THE GOVINDARAJA SHRINE AT TIRUPATHI.

He then paid a visit to Alvar Tirunagari and on his return heard that his maternal uncle at Tirupathi was no more. He then repaired thither and got the funeral ceremonies duly performed by the elder of the two cousins of his, the younger of whom he had long regarded as his son in apostolic succession. It was while he was yet here that he heard that the Govindaraja temple at Tirupathi had been overthrown and the image cast into the sea. He caused the image to be brought over, and housed it in the temple at the foot of the sacred hill where again he caused to be set up the images of the Alvars and Andal as elsewhere.

PILGRIMAGE TO HOLY PLACES.

He then returned to Srirangam by way of Kanchi and Madhurantakam. He then went to Tirumalirunjolai and Srivilliputtur to complete his round of pilgrimage to the sacred shrines of Vishnu in the South. Having thus established his influence throughout South India and having organised and popularised the teachings of Visishtadvaita-Vedanta he could now think his mission was at an end.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE SUCCESSION.

He arranged for the continuance of his teaching by nominating seventy-four among the worthiest of his followers. Of this number four had special custody of the Bhashya, one among whom had the Prabhanda teaching also. This one was no other than his cousin son Pillan, who became the actual successor of Ramanuja.

While he was preparing to depart this world he found the most indomitable among his companions anticipate him in this as well. Having got his funeral rites duly performed, Ramanuja felt himself quite at the end of his mission when again at the importunate entreaty of his disciples, he had to permit 3 of his own representations consecrated and set up in Srirangam, Sriperumbuthur and Tirunarainapuram. This example had been followed later on and every Vishnu temple in the South has, as a necessary adjunct, a little shrine for Ramanuja. Consoling his sorrowing disciples and companions, Ramanuja felt the call and passed away quietly having completed his 120th year in this world.

The above, in brief, is an outline of the life of Ramanuja, as the most authoritative tradition has it. This tradition has an inevitable tendency to gather volume, as time passes, and there have been as many varieties of this biography as are found interested hagiologists. But this account relies particularly on two contemporary works which have special claims for our acceptance. Neither of them is a professed biography and both of them were written for the acceptance-

of contemporaries and one of them had been read before Ramanuja and obtained his imprimatur. This is the work of Amudan of Arangam and consists of one hundred stanzas in Tamil included in the Prabandha of the Tamil part of the Vaishnava lore. The other is the work of a disciple also, by name Vaduhanambi, (or in Sanskrit Andhrapurana) perhaps because he was a Telugu man. This is called Yathiraja Vaibhavam and consists of 114 slokas. This work describes all that Ramanuja did in a way so free from exaggeration that it would strike one as being particularly reliable. The name of the author occurs among the 74 successors of first degree of Ramanuja and his obligation to the master is indicated in the sloka quoted hereunder.'

" Kamschid Kasminschid arthe prathiniyathathaya sanniyojyantharangair, thathra kshirartha kritye pratiniyathamaho dasamapyathyanarham Kurvan sriman yathisassvapathavinatha thathdasanudasam mamapyathyanthabaktam svahithamiva sadha gopayan sopi payat." Having ordered his most trusted disciples to accept particular offices, Ramanuja " who protected his worthy servant, servant of his servants, entrusted with the service of providing milk, may he prosper." It now remains to examine historically what truth there is in the above account from available historical material and how far certain impressions that prevail regarding Ramanuja and his teachings find justification from his life and times.

Having recounted the incidents in the life of Ramanuja in the previous sections of the paper, we

shall now proceed to examine critically whether the main incidents of his life are what his disciples claim them to have been and whether recent research, so far as it bears upon these, lends any support to these as a whole. The following incidents will be examined seriatim, as they appear to be arranged in chronological order :—

1. Ramanuja's conversion of Yadavaprakasa, his preceptor.

2. His conversion of Yegnamurti, an Advaita Sannyasin.

3. Settlement of the Smartha Vaishnava dispute about the God at Tirupathi.

4. The Chola persecution of Ramanuja.

5. The Hoysala Vishnuvardhana's conversion.

6. Foundation of the temple at Tirunarayanapuram (Melukote).

7. The conversion of Amudan of Arangam, the author of Ramanuja Nurrandhadhi.

8. The consecration of the Govinda temple at the foot of the Tirupathi Hill,

For the purposes of this again we shall, as far as possible, have recourse to such works of reliable authority, as those of Ramanuja's contemporaries and immediate successors only.

i. Yadavaprakasa was an advaitic teacher of reputation at Conjeevaram. He was also a writer of authority in his philosophy; and in his days and after he was a leader of a school of thought, that as the best representative of advaitic exposition, Vedantha Desika

quotes him and disputes his position. He is the reputed author of Yatidharma Samuchayam and of the Yadava Nikandu: according to others the two works are from separate persons. At any rate the Yadava of the former work is in all probability, the philosophical expounder of the advaitic system. In the face of these facts, it would appear impossible that he should have been the first convert to the teachings of his ex-disciple Ramanuja, whom he did not love overmuch as a disciple. So it does, and I had long thought that the story was a pious fabrication. There is no reference in the Yatidharma Samuchchayam to his conversion at all. This is a work which undertakes to examine what the duties of a sannyasi are according to the best authority; and he seems to hold that there is good authority for both classes of sannyasins—those with the sacred thread and tuft of hair on the head (the Vaishnava) and those without these adjuncts (the Saiva). Except a reference to the 'Prabhandas' in the invocatory verse and the invocation itself being addressed to Vishnu as Dattatrya, the work is non-committing in this particular. But the work, Ramanuja Nurrandhadhi of Amudan of Arangam, one of his own converts, refers often to success in disputation against great controversialists, but does not mention names though the references are such as would warrant the inference that they were in particular Yadavaprakasa and the sannyasin Yegnamurti (Stanzas 58, 64 and 88). But in two works of Vedanta Desika coming just three generations after or say about a century, we

have direct references to the purpose. The first half of verse 13 of Ethiraja Saptati refers to "Svabhalat Ud-dhrita Yadavaprakasa" (he that had up-rooted with his own strength Yadavaprakasa). This need not necessarily mean conversion but that such was actually the case is clearly stated in one of his other works, Sata-dhushani.* *Vedanta Desika followed Ramanuja* at an interval of three generations only and we might take him as a sufficient authority for the fact, as he takes Yadava's opinions and seriously controverts them in other parts of his works.

ii. As to Yegnamurti's conversion we are not in a position to say anything as nothing more is known of him than the fact, perhaps of his having been a sannyasin (Ekadhandi).

iii. The question about Tirupathi is of far greater importance, the more so as there has recently been going on a lively controversy about the same subject

* I am obliged for this reference to Tarkathirtha Punditaratnam Kasturirangachar of Mysore.

असमीक्षितदशापरित्यक्तत्रयसूत्रैश्च यादवप्रकाशैः समीक्ष्यसंजातानुशयैः स्वैरेवप्रमाणमनुयुक्ता वासुदेवयात्रार्थसत्रसमागत। ननादिगन्तवास्तव्यशिष्टाश्च प्रायश्चित्तमेव उत्तरंददुः भ्रष्टस्तर्हि असावितिचेन्न । प्रायश्चित्तात्पूर्वमेव तथात्वस्य प्राचीनैर्निश्चितत्वात् । तत्समुचितस्यैव मतिधर्मस्याद्यापि मानवादिवदविनाशात् :— ।

शतदूषणी—यतिलिङ्गभेदभङ्गम् 64

ततश्च परित्यक्तयज्ञोपवीतादिकेषु एकदण्डिकेष्वपि-अद्यापि आयुष्मती विप्रतिपत्तिः भास्करयादवप्रकाशादि ग्रन्थरसायन सेवयानिवर्तते ॥

शतदूषणी—अत्लेपकभमतङ्गम् 65

in the columns of the journals and papers consequent on Mr. Venkyya's reference to the temple having been Saivite in his official report. It will be seen that the Vaishnava account has it that the God on the hill had just lent his characteristic weapons, the disc and the conch, to the Tondaman Chakravarti. Let it be noted here, in passing, that this evidently refers to the conquest of Kalingam by Karunakara Tondaman about 1111 A.D. Messrs. M. Narayanasami Iyer, B.A., B.L., and T. A. Gopinatha Rao, M.A., have both written concerning this in the *Sen Tamil*. The former inclines to the Vaishnava view and the latter to the Saiva. The question, therefore, needs to be examined with care. The following facts concerning the point appear to be agreed upon. The Tevaram hymners have not at all celebrated the shrine; the Vaishnava Alvars have. The Tamil epic Silappadhikaram has explicitly given the temple a Vaishnava character and there is no possibility of mistake here. On this account, therefore, Mr. Gopinatha Rao would bring the Silappadhikaram after Poygai Alvar (whether he brings it also after Ramanuja is not quite clear, though he shows a leaning to bring it to the middle of the 12th century). This gentleman holds that the original God was Subrahmaniya as the place is called 'Ilangoil' and the God is referred to once or twice as 'Kumara' though not without other adjuncts. The latter is quite decisive according to him. So it would be, if the premises have been quite as they are represented to be. One fundamental defect here is the taking out of words without

reference to their context. Mr. Gopinath Rao refers to the God being known as Balajee among the Northerners. This may be, but Balajee is not exclusively applied to Subrahmaniya, if applied to him at all. I have here numbers of persons known as Balajee, but the word stands for Balakrishna. This is equally sound; there is something more. The early Alvars, Poyga Alvar, Bhutattar, Pey Alvar delight in referring to God in one of his aspects as a child either as Rama or Krishna preferably the latter. One has only to look through the writings of these to be convinced of this. Why they do so is beside the point. It is this Balakrishna—he is not so named in the work—that has given rise to the name Balajee.* Since, Krishna, as Vitoba is very popular in the Mahratta country. Anyhow this interpretation of Balajee is in keeping with the writings of the Alvars who had bestowed their best thoughts upon God's manifestation at Tirupathi. Pey Alvar lends the greatest support to this contention as to the nature of the deity. He refers to the God as இளங்குமரன் றன் விண்ணகர் (61); விளங்கனிக்குக் கன்றெறிந்தோன் வெற்பு (68); இளங்குமரர் கோமானிடம் (72) நான் முகத்தோன் நன்குறங்கில், வாய்த்தகுழவியாய் (77). It will thus be seen that he refers to the same deity in the four different ways as above. They are of course to be taken synonymously. References one and three may be

* When last at Tirupathi I heard another version. When the Northerners first appeared at the shrine they were struck with the softly beautiful look of the image and exclaimed Bala (damsel). Hence the name Balajee as they say.

doubtful, but the other two must be sought to help us in the interpretation. Reference 2 clearly indicates one of the acts of young Krishna, and reference, 4, though not equally clearly, to an achievement of Vishnu, when Brahma was about to grant the boons sought of him by Ravana. If a more direct indication be needed, the stanza 62 makes it clear to any unprejudiced mind. There are a number of places sacred to Vishnu and the names given are Vaishnavite names *e.g.*, Tiruvarangam and Thirukudandhai—(Kumbhakonam). There is thus nothing to bear out the contention that the God there was ever meant to be Subrahmaniya. Stanza 63 of the same 3rd Tiruvandadi states clearly that the manifestation of God there is in the united form of Siva and Vishnu. This is borne out by the stanzas 5 & 98 of the 1st Tiruvandadi. This would, therefore, make it clear that the God was of the Harihara type. Then the question arises why it is that Ilango speaks of it as a Vishnu temple in such clear terms. The explanation perhaps would be that the temple had been known only as a Vishnu temple, though there was the duplex character in the idol. This could be noticed only by a devotee who was in close touch with the temple which Ilango could not pretend to have been. There would be nothing very strange about this if most people now-a-days do not know it. Its established reputation as a Vishnu temple accounts for the omission of Tirupathi by the Nayanmars of the Saivites. How then was it that the Saivites laid claim to it in the days of Ramanuja ? Ramanuja's time was

remarkable for the revival of the Prabandam which was being taught much more widely than before. Besides this, Ramanuja's cousin's conversion must have made the Saivites alive to the danger of this Vaishnava neighbourhood. So on the old grounds of the dual form of the God they revived their claims, particularly as the ruling sovereign was likely to lean to the Saiva side. Naturally enough Ramanuja appealed to a trial by ordeal of some sort. Ever after, there appears to have been no dispute as to the character of the deity. This must have taken place sometime after 1111 A. D., the probable date of the conquest of Kalingam.

iv. The next item of importance in the life of Ramanuja is the Chola persecution. The Chola ruler at the time was Kulothunga, the Chalukya Chola (1070—1118 A. D.) The Cholas were Saivas most of them, but they were tolerant enough of other religions as well, while some of them even went the length of endowing Vishnu temples. This Kulothunga does not appear to have been particularly narrow-minded, as he made a grant even to the Bauddha settlement at Negapatam. But as the Vaishnava account itself has it, he was persuaded by others into compelling all to assent to the doctrine of the supremacy of Siva. This is not at all improbable considering that this was the period of great Saiva activity and the ruler was the special patron of Sekkilar. The general body of Vaishnavas do not appear to have been ill-treated, but Ramanuja's active work at Srirangam attracted attention and ended in the blinding of Kurathalvar and the old precep-

tor of Ramanuja himself. This must have taken place about the nineties of the 11th century. And Ramanuja was compelled to leave the country. His immigration into the Mysore country brings us to the next important incident in his life.

v & vi. He moved up the Kavery and settled at Saligram, wherefrom he had been invited to the headquarters of Vitala Deva Raya or Bitti Deva. This latter could not have been the ruling sovereign at the time as his brother was alive to the end of the century and a few years later. During the last years of the century he was still active in the Gangavadi frontier, and it was while here that he must have met Ramanuja. His elder brother "had for his God Isa" and this meant perhaps he was a Saiva. Bitti Deva was converted and he helped Ramanuja in the restoration of the temple of Narayana at Melukote. I have elsewhere* shown that the persecution of the Jains ascribed to Vishnuvardhana is hardly supported by facts. The consecration of the temple at Melukote is placed in the year 1099 A. D. twelve years after Ramanuja's arrival at Saligram. This might have been the case as Ramanuja would have taken care not to provoke the hostility of the ruler of his new domicile. Vishnuvardhana thenceforward supported the cause of Ramanuja and encouraged Vishnavaism. He went on building temples and endowing them, not without supporting the other temples and creeds as well, though not perhaps to the same extent. This activity culminated

* *Mysore Review* for March, 1905. (Vide Appendix.)

in the building and consecration of the temple at Belur in (or about) 1117 A.D.* There is nothing improbable in the date, as it was in this year that he could claim to have become master of the Gangavadi. So Ramanuja must have lived in Mysore for nearly a quarter of a century. It was the death of the Chola Kulothunga in 1118 A. D. that enabled him to return. But then there is perhaps an inconsistency with respect to dates. As the Guruparamparai has it, it would appear that the Chola died soon after the blinding of the two friends of Ramanuja; but in actual fact, if the date 1099 A. D. be taken as correct for the Melukote incident, which appears too early to be true, the death of the persecuting Chola came many years after. This kind of accuracy, it would be too much to expect in an account such as we have and of its professed character.

vii. The next incident of importance is the conversion of Amudan of Arangam, the manager of the temple at Srirangam, a non-Vaishnava. For this we have evidence of the convert himself. He is the author of the Ramanuja Nurrandhadhi and in verses 3, 4 & 7 of the work he makes it clear that he was a convert by favour of Ramanuja and Kurathalvar. In verses 8, 21, he clearly describes Ramanuja's relation to the Alwars and Nadhamuni and Alavandar (Yamunaithuraivar), in spite of opinions to the contrary by scholars who implicitly believe in the opinion of Dr. Caldwell. Not only this. The centum (in fact 108) of his verses gives in a small span, mostly allusively but

* Hassan vol of the Epigraphia Carnataka Ins. Belur 58 & 71.

clearly enough, the main achievements of Ramanuja and thus becomes the contemporary authority for mos of the facts of Ramanuja's life as detailed above. The moderation of tone and sobriety of language commend its authority the more, as else Ramanuja would not have been persuaded into including it among the Prabandam 4000.

viii. Lastly comes the construction and consecration of the Govinda shrine at the foot of the Tirupathi Hill. This affords the best clue to the date of Ramanuja. The Guruparamparai gives this as the last act of a busy life under circumstances which, thanks to the researches of Brahma Sri R. Raghava Iyengar, Court Pandit of Ramnad and Editor of the *Sen Tamil*, the organ of the Madura Tamil Sangam, prove to be quite historical. The story it will be remembered is that the Govinda Raja temple at Chidambaram having been removed from the premises of the great Siva temple, Ramanuja and his disciples got the idol enshrined in a new temple at Tirupathi. In a number of historical works relating to the period, particularly in the Kulothunga Cholan Ula of Ottakuthan,* this achievement is ascribed to Kulothunga II, the son and successor of Vikrama Chola and one of the patrons of Kuthan himself. There it is described that he renovated the Saiva temple and plated the roofing with gold—incidentally mentioning that the "God Vishnu had been sent back to his original shrine—the sea." †

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* Sen Tamil Vol. III, Pt. 5 pp. (166—167).

† Sen Tamil Vol. III, Pt. 8 pp. (301—302.)

This would mean not only the removal but the throwing of the image into the sea. In another, there is a reference to Kulothunga's having rooted out the minor Gods from the great shrine. This must have taken place in the reign of Kulothunga II (cir. 1123-1146). That the Vaishnavas were enabled to enshrine the God at Tirupathi perhaps shews the limitation of the Chola authority at the time or their indifference to the fact, provided the obnoxious God had been removed from the hallowed presence of their "Holy of Holies," a place full of the most narrow-minded of the Saivites. That the Vishnu shrine was previously in the temple at Chidambaram is borne out by a reference in the works of Manikka Vasagar (Tiruchchirambalakkovai, 86). There is absolutely no reason to doubt the authority of these works about this particular and this would give us the ultimate limits of Ramanuja's active life. According to the traditional account Ramanuja lived for 120 years from 1017 A.D.—1137 A.D. Some object to this length and regard it as a fabrication just to give the reformer the 'Mahadasa' as it is called. It is a matter of very small consequence to us whether he lived the 120 years or no. What is more important for our purposes is that his was a long and active life and covered three reigns of the Cholas :—Kulothunga I (1070 A.D. to 1118 A.D.), Vikramachola (1118 A.D.—1135 A.D.), Kulothunga II. (1123—1146 A.D.) Ramanuja's active life might, therefore, be safely referred to the last quarter of the 11th and the first-half of the 12th century A.D.

Sri Ramanujacharya

HIS PHILOSOPHY.

BY

MR. T. RAJAGOPALACHARYAR, M.A., B.L.

THE TERM 'VISISHTADWAITA' EXPLAINED.

THE Visishtadwaita is so-called because it inculcates the *adwaita* or oneness of God, with *visésha* or attributes. It is, therefore, 'qualified non-dualism.' God alone exists; all else that is seen is His manifestation, attribute, or *Sakti*. Such attributes are *chit* or the individual souls and *achit* or matter. The adwaitic position is also that God alone exists and all else is manifestation. Herein is the common element between the two views; but the Adwaitin regards the manifestation as unreal and temporary, and as a result of *Avidya* or Nescience. In consequence, the one Brahman is without any attribute, in his view. Ramanuja and his school regard the attributes as real, and permanent, but subject to the control of the one Brahman in all their modifications and evolutions. The oneness of God is compatible with the existence of attributes, as the latter are incapable of existing alone, and so do not constitute independent things. They are called the *prakaras* or the modes, *sesha* or the accessories,

and *niyamya* or the controlled, of the one Brahman. The word Brahman is thus used either to denote the central unity, when it becomes possible to speak of the souls and matter, as its attributes, or to denote the combined trinity when the whole universe may properly be described as consisting of Brahman and Brahman alone. The Visishtadwaitin does not make the unphilosophical statement that the souls are absolutely independent entities, endowed with the capacity of separate existence and activity, apart from Brahman.

THE FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTES.

The Brahman (we use the word in the first of the above senses) is Intelligence. It is something more—it is the Knower. Where attributes are denied, and all that exists is homogenous intelligence, as in the Adwaita, there can be no knower; for there is nothing to know. But for the Visishtadwaitin, Brahman is a knower, and the variety, philosophically essential for knowledge, is furnished by the attributes. Brahman is Bliss, *i.e.*, he is blissful; for a mixture of the opposite, pain, is unimaginable in his case. It will thus be seen that besides the attributes of souls and matter, which may be called 'the concrete attributes' if such a phrase may be used, Brahman has various abstract attributes qualities strictly so called, denoting his perfection from various points of view. The Visishtadwaitin considers 'Intelligence' as partaking of the dual character of an abstract and a concrete attribute; and he instances 'light' as an example of the possibility of such an attribute. Intelligence is the essence of Brahman; it

is an attribute as well, in its nature of universal pervasion. Again Brahman is real, *satya*. By this is understood that he is without *vikara* or modification of any kind. The souls and matter are *asatya* or unreal, which again means that they are subject to modification, which is necessarily an element of impurity. In the case of souls, this modification takes the form of expansion or contraction of Intelligence. In mineral, plant or animal life, the soul, under *karmic* control, is dull or of suppressed Intelligence. The modifications of matter are of a more serious kind. In the creation and expansion of the universe, matter undergoes a real modification of its nature. Such change is called *parinama* or evolution, as contrasted with *vivarta* or apparent variation, which is the view of the Adwaitin. The Visishtadwaitin holds that, in spite of the souls and matter being pervaded by Brahman, any modifications of them though under Brahman's control, do not touch His essence; just as the Adwaitin maintains that the operation of *Avidya* do not affect the one Reality. The 'unreality' of the cosmos is thus another point of agreement between the Adwaitin and the Visihtadwaitin; but this, it must be admitted, is merely a nominal agreement, considering the important diversity in their conceptions of the unreality. The Visishtadwaitin would thus call Brahman, '*Sat*,' and the rest '*Asat*'; in a narrower sense; he reserves the epithet 'Asat' to Matter, which undergoes change in its essence, unlike the souls whose essence is like to the Brahman's and never changes.

TWO STATES OF BRAHMAN.

There are two states of existence for the Brahman. One is absolute quiescence or *pralaya*, when all the souls and matter exist in Him in deep sleep as it were. No differentiation is possible in that stage between the souls and matter; these are then, as it were, non-existent. '*Sat* alone exists, one without a second.' Existence is the only phrase that can be applied to the Brahman then, as volition, not to speak of creation, is potential or has not commenced to work. Then begins the second stage, creation. To the Adwaitin, creation is a negative, an unreal, act. It is the clouding of the pure Intelligence of Brahman by the inexplicable Avidya, which produces the manifestation of apparent diversity. The Visishtadwaitin considers creation as a positive volitional effort of the Brahman to display real diversity, by actualising the energy for change which is innate in both the souls and matter. *Sa Aikshata bahu syam prajayèya iti.* 'He thought, may I become many, may I grow forth.' The *antah pravesa* 'entry within' which the Upanishads speak of as taking place at creation is not strictly true. To the Visishadwaitin, it means only the Brahman's willing to develop His inseparable attributes, souls and matter; for Brahman was 'within' even before creation. To the Adwaitin, the *antah pravesa* is entirely metaphorical. The language of the *Parinàma Vada* is used in his view, merely for facility of comprehension.

THE PURPOSE OF CREATION.

The ethical justification for creation is Justice.

The fruits of actions (karma) have to be bestowed, equally and impartially, and Brahman does this by endowing souls with appropriate bodies of various kinds and giving room for further functioning and display of free-will within limits; the further evolution depends on the manner in which the individual uses his opportunities. As karma is, in the Hindu view, beginningless, it becomes unnecessary to account for its origin. To the objection that Brahman could have no purpose, being without wants, in engaging itself in creation, the reply is, in the words of the author of the Sutras, *lokavat tu lila kaivalyam* (II. 1·33), it is mere recreation, as in ordinary life. In other words, as no compulsion can be predicated of the Brahman to evolve the universe, the Visishtadwaitin accounts for it by the only other possible alternative, that it is mere recreation for the Brahman, but the strictest justice for the souls concerned. Sankara adds the explanation that His innate nature (*svabhava*) is to create, which does not carry us much further, and then reminds us that the whole discussion is unreal, as Brahman is never the agent of creation.

THE AUTHORITY OF REVELATION.

To the Visishtadwaitin, as to the Adwaitin, the Vedas and Smritis are the sole and independent authority for the knowledge of Brahman. Reason has no operation except in matters perceptible by the senses. Transcendental notions as those with respect to the nature and attributes of Brahman and the souls, can only be got from Revelation. This position appears

illogical, dethroning, as it does, *Reason*, the accepted instrument of correct conclusion in all processes of thought. To explain this anomaly, we have to dwell a little on the exact place assigned to reason by Sankara as well as Ramanuja. Reason is an indefinite word. It depends for its correctness, on the intellectual capacity of the person arguing, the extent of his information and other circumstances. Until a fallacy is exposed, an argument is apparently sound. Then it is upset and the conclusion has to be reached by other reasonings. This want of finality in mere reason is referred to in the Sutras (II.1-11) and is the cause of the Vedantic systems rejecting it as a sufficient authority in the knowledge of Brahman as the Nyayikas did. The argument from design may at best establish a highly endowed intelligent first cause or causes, but could not lead to the conception of a perfect Brahman as first cause. And so, the help of mere reason as a sufficiently competent determining factor in the establishment of Brahman, as first cause, is rejected. This must not be taken to mean that the Hindu Vedantins reject argumentation in their philosophy. Every page of their writings is a standing monument of their skill in the subtlest reasonings. According to them the purpose of reasoning is two-fold. It has, in the first place, full scope in matters which do not transcend the senses. In the second place, it is a valuable adjunct in ontology, where the texts of the Vedas are to be construed. As it so happens that most important texts are liable to be disputed as to their meanings, it goes without say-

ing that there is full room for logical interpretation with respect to them. To say that explicit Vedic texts are unquestionable authorities means one of two things, either that we take them as the conclusions of great minds reached after acute reasoning, on matters which our feeble intellects could not sufficiently comprehend or we consider them to be the records of unique direct experiences of men who had trained their powers of mental perception by methods to which we have no access. Neither position is inconceivable or necessarily absurd. So many scientific positions are accepted by the general body of educated men all over the world on the faith of representations that those positions have been verified by some one by actual experiments. There may be danger of mistakes and mis-statements in either case; but those like Sankara and Ramanuja, who do not feel the position of an agnostic satisfactory or comfortable, have preferred to base their ontological position on revelation, while fully trusting to their capacity for ratiocination to meet objections on the part of those who do not subscribe to the authority of the Vedas. Between these two, there is, however, a difference. Sankara includes the Srutis and Smritis among ephemeral things whose purpose is served when once oneness is realised. Ramanuja considers them as always authoritative and as expressive of the eternal commands of the Deity whose breath they are said to be. An important difference arises between these two thinkers, based on this distinction. In Sankara's view the compulsory nature of ordained duties last only

till an individual has realised by thinking his unity with God. Ramanuja considers the performance of such duties obligatory as long as life and physical power endure. (See Sutras III. 4.32-35.)

There are also certain assertions in Ramanuja's religious tenets which must be unacceptable to those who do not believe in revelation or adopt his interpretation. Such are his eternally free souls (*nityas*), heaven conceived as a distinct place apart from and outside the changeable universe (though not outside Brahman), the existence of the Deity in physical forms of various kinds, the peculiar paths of souls on their release from the body, and so on. Belief in these is based on express texts and no reasoning can be called to prove them. It is Ramanuja's contention that reasoning is equally powerless to disapprove them. And a disapproval of these in no way affects Ramanuja's conclusions, as regards the nature of Brahman and its relation to souls and matter, as philosophical positions consonant to abstract reasoning.

MODE OF RECONCILIATION.

We now come to Ramanuja's mode of reconciling Vedic texts. Western scholars have tried to arrange chronologically the principal Upanishads and to discern, in some of them, partial truths; in others, crude statements; in others again, the completest insight into things transcendental that may be given to man. How far this discussion is convincing we shall not stop to examine. Where passages in the same Upanishads appear to conflict, as in the *Chandogya*, the *Brihad*-

Aranyaka, or the *Isa-Vasya*, it is evident that the ordinary rules of interpretation must be resorted to, to arrive at a consistent meaning. The respect which Hindus have entertained for the Upanishads on account of their antiquity has prevented them from considering any of them as of inferior authority to the rest. It follows that a consistent doctrine has to be attempted out of at least the principal Upanishads. This is what Sankara and Ramanuja have attempted to do, each in his own way. And this is indeed what Badarayana, the first interpreter of the Upanishads known to us, has himself done in the Sutras.

Professor Deussen and others have conjectured that Badarayana had a partiality for the Chandogya and hence the frequent reference to it in the topics discussed. Indian scholars thoroughly equipped with an intimate acquaintance with "the immense and highly technical philosophical literature, which is only just beginning to be studied and comprehended, in part, by European scholars," to use the words of Dr. Thibant, have ascertained that, in the two Mimamsas, the passage discussed in each adhikarana are only typical and not exhaustive and that the order of exposition is mainly based on logical sequence. It follows that there is no justification for the view that one or two Upanishads are specially intended as the repository of philosophical truths to the exclusion of other Upanishads.

The texts of the Upanishads referring to the Supreme Self are of two kinds. Some speak of Him

as *nirguna*, attributeless. Others describe him as having attributes or qualities like wisdom, power, etc. As truth can be only one, the natural question arises whether these texts can be reconciled in any manner. Sankara's view is that predominance must be given to the *nirguna* texts, as the others have the effect of limiting the Infinite, which should not be done. Hence texts like '*Ekam eva Adwaitiyam*,' one only, without a second,' *neha nana Asti*,' there is here no diversity, etc. are interpreted by him, without much straining, as establishing the absolute oneness of the Brahman. And the other texts are relegated to an inferior position and made to refer to an imaginary and inferior Brahman called *apara* or *karya* Brahman, *i.e.*, the Brahman in conjunction with its creative power called *maya*. Ramanuja's difficulty seems to be that this sharp division of the passages into those referring to the higher and those referring to the lower Brahman is not easily and directly inferable from the texts themselves. On the other hand, the passages are so mixed up that it is impossible to say that this distinction, if true, was ever prominently kept up. His reconciliation is, therefore, as follows: the texts of the Upanishads do not inculcate an attributeless Brahman; the attributes are real and not the result of Avidya; the texts referring to those attributes expound the Brahman, as He is, with the souls and matter as His inseparable *modes*. Brahman is one, only in His compound nature, as described already. The texts denying any attributes for Him are to be taken as meaning that He has no low or

inauspicious attributes, such as liability to changes, death, sorrow, etc. The texts as to creation, as mentioned already, mean a real modification of the attributes, souls and matter of the Brahman and do not mean that Brahman becomes suffused with Nescience and imagines a variety. The souls are many and God is immanent, both in them and in matter. The texts which speak of unity and deny variety do so of the totality of the Brahman with his attributes. Texts which deny a second to Brahman, mean that there is no other controlling power in the universe apart from Him. Texts which deny the possibility of knowing Brahman, do not mean that he cannot be the object of thought, as there is no thinker; they mean only that His wonderful and priceless excellences or qualities could not be adequately described. Else, according to Ramanuja, they would conflict with hosts of passages which prescribe knowledge of Brahman and ascribe qualities to Him. The text of the Brihad Aranyaka II. 3. 6. which contains the famous words "*neti neti*" "not so, not so" and is taken by Sankara to teach the negation of all attributes is interpreted by Ramanuja (Sutras. III. 2. 21) as merely denying the possibility of adequate knowledge of the Brahman. "This interpretation" says he, "is confirmed by the fact that after the negative phrase comes an epithet of Brahman as 'the True of the True, for the Pranas are the True'." Ramanuja interprets this text to mean that the Pranas or the individual souls are *satya* or 'true,' *i. e.*, not subject to change in their essence, while the Supreme Self is

altogether real or unchangeable. "He is, therefore, more eminently *true* than they (the souls) are."

THE THEORY OF CAUSATION.

The theory of causation has profoundly exercised the minds of all Hindu philosophers; the Vedantins, like the Sankhyas, maintain the oneness of cause and effect in essence, as opposed to the logicians who maintain that they are different. In what sense, then, is the world which is an effect, one with its cause? Badarayana has a topic discussing this point. (Sutras, I. IV. 23, etc.) Here he maintains that the Brahman is not merely the instrumental cause, but also the material cause of the universe. He is, in the position, not merely of the potter but also of the mud, to give an illustration familiar to Indian philosophers. A succeeding Sutra, (I. 4. 27,) refers to the way in which Brahman as the cause becomes the effect. It is by '*parinama*' or owing to modification. In Ramanuja's view the oneness of cause and effect arises from the fact that the cause is the Brahman in the *sukshma* or subtle state, when the souls and matter are undeveloped and the effect is Brahman also, now comprised of the Supreme Self and the souls and matter, the latter in a fully developed state.* Sankara, practically admitting the interpretation of the Sutras given above, would, however, explain the modification as '*Vivarta*' really, *i.e.*, phenomenal creation by Brahman as influenced by Avidya or Maya. That the

* The phrase 'Visishtadwaitam' is sometimes explained as the oneness or identity and the two *Visishta* entities mentioned in the text, as cause and effect.

two philosophers are entirely at variance in their view of this oneness is also clear from their respective commentaries on the important Sutra II-1-15, (14, in Sankara's numbering) a discussion of which would be out of place in this brief exposition. We would only draw attention to an important and suggestive statement of Sankaracharya, at the close of his commentary of the above Sutra, that Badarayana, in his view, omits to contradict the reality of the manifested world and adopts the language of the *Parinama Vada*, for the purpose of facilitating the exposition of the saguna meditations later on in the work.

THE DOCTRINE OF NESCIENCE.

Ramanuja's Sribhashya is remarkable for the lengthy disquisition on various topics by which his actual commentary on the Sutras is preceded. In this disquisition, he treats of various controversial points and expounds fully his differences of views from those of Sankara. One of the most important of these is his statement of objections to the theory of Maya or Avidya, which is a fundamental one in Sankara's philosophy and is, at the same time, the most vulnerable point in it. Is this Avidya different from or identical with Brahman? The former view would seem to undermine Sankara's doctrine of oneness and the latter is equally untenable. Sankara cuts the Gordian knot by boldly declaring that it (the Avidya) is *Sadasadanirvachaniya*, *i. e.*, it is indescribable as either existing or non-existing. Ramanuja expounds at great length his difficulties as to the tenability of the Maya theory, under

seven heads, a clear account of which is to be found in Professor Ranghacharya's 'Analytical outline' prefixed to his valuable translation of the Sri Bhashya, Vol. I. Ramanuja's objections are of this wise: The Avidya cannot operate on the Brahman, directly, for His nature is Intelligence and this would repel Nescience by its intrinsic merit. Nor can it operate on the individual souls, for these are the outcome of the action of Avidya and cannot, therefore, be acted upon in anticipation. Again, to state that Nescience clouds the Brahman is impossible, for that would mean that Brahman's luminous nature is thereby destroyed, a position which is not admissible. Avidya, again, as defined by Sankara, is in Ramanuja's view, inconceivable, as the simultaneous possession of two opposite characters, as existence and non-existence, cannot be predicated of anything in human conception. Ramanuja, further, does not think that to describe Avidya as 'indescribable' really strengthens the position of Sankara; for if a thing is absolutely indescribable, it must be non-existent as an entity. Then Ramanuja points out that such an Avidya cannot be proved to exist by any known means of proof including Vedic or Smriti texts; if such an Avidya should exist, it is irremovable, says Ramanuja, for the knowledge of attributeless Brahman required to remove it, is according to him an impossible thing, such a Brahman not being provable. Lastly, such an Avidya is irremovable for another reason. In Ramanuja's view the ignorance, being the result of karma, can be removed only by en-

joined action and meditation. Mere knowledge of Brahman cannot remove it. For all these reasons, Ramanuja concludes that the theory of Maya is untenable and opposed to the tenor of the Vedic texts.

CONCLUSION.

It is not the purpose of this sketch to explain all Ramanuja's objections to Sankaracharya's views. What has been attempted is only the setting forth of Ramanuja's views on important points with just so much reference to the doctrines of Sankara, as is necessary to understand Ramanuja. To really grasp the vital differences between these two eminent philosophers, and to arrive at a proper estimate of their relative merits, would mean a thorough discussion of three important questions, namely, (1) who is the better interpreter of the Upanishads, (2) who has more accurately represented the views of the Vedanta Sutras, and (3) who is entitled to greater respect as a philosophical thinker. These are questions of so difficult a nature that they are entirely beyond our scope and capacity. Enough has, however, been said to show that Ramanuja when he becomes better known, would most certainly be deemed entitled to a high place among the world's philosophers, and his system, though not possessing the simplicity or universality of Sankaracharya's, is yet an eminently sound one, compatible with the admission of the reality of the cosmos and a high conception of the nature and attributes of the Deity.

Ramanuja and Vaishnavism.*

BY

RAO BAHADUR PROF. M. RANGACHARYA, M.A.

VAISHNAVAISM is a very old form of religion known to the History of Civilisation in India. How old it is, it is not now possible to determine; but it is certain that its sources may be traced to the Vedas. Vishnu in Vedic literature is seen to be a solar deity, and is conceived as an all-pervading god. It is in accordance with a very widely accepted Indian derivation of the word to interpret Vishnu as a pervader; and the conception of this same god as Trivikrama—as the god who was able to cover the whole universe in three strides—is also distinctly Vedic in origin. Moreover, as a god he is said to have his place in the supreme heaven, in *Vishnoh paramam padam*, as it is called in the Vedas. Modern European scholars consider that this *parama-pada* of Vishnu is, in all probability, the position of the sun in the zenith. This is obviously the highest position conceivable that may be occupied by any object during the day. Thus Vishnu was of old a solar deity who occupied the highest heaven, and was at the same time capable of pervading with his light and life all the three worlds making up the visible universe, the earth-world, the mind-world and the sky-world. The all-pervading god and the god who occu-

*From a lecture by Rao Bahadur Prof. M. Rangachariar, M.A. of the Madras Presidency College.

pies the nighest heaven—such evidently is the conception underlying Vishnu in Vedic literature. From this conception as its source has arisen Vaishnavaism, which, in its various forms, is now recognised to be the most predominant and the most popular religion among the Hindus. To ascertain and describe the position occupied by Ramanuja in relation to the progress and development of this great religion is the main aim which I intend to keep in view in my lecture.

The primary conception underlying the original deity is a matter of great importance in determining the course of development of the religion associated with that deity. This can be amply illustrated by means of instances that may be gathered from the history of religions. There is, for instance, another solar deity in Vedic literature, who goes by the name of MITRA; and this god Mitra, understood as the Sanskrit language requires, is the sun-god conceived as a friend. This Mitra is not merely a god of our Vedas, but is a god known to the Zend-Avesta of the Parsees as well. He seems therefore to have been a god held in honor by the Iranian as well as by the Indian Aryas even before they separated from each other. That separation must of course have taken place very very long ago. It may well be that this Mitra was a deity worshipped in Persia before Zoroaster taught his religion—the modern religion of the Parsees. A great French savant, Ernest Renan, has solemnly remarked that, if Christianity had not gone to Europe, in all probability Mitraism would have become the religion of

Europeans. In saying this he evidently pays a very high compliment to this religion of MITRA and draws our attention to the tendency of that religion to be helpful to man in the way of encouraging in him purity love, piety and righteousness. He even seems to grant that the moral influence of that religion could indeed have been in no way inferior to that which Christianity has had among Europeans and Americans. Now, can it be said that the original conception of this god as a friend has had no power or part in determining the really superior moral merit of Mitraism? Surely its friendly god must have done a great deal in determining the line of development of that religion.

So it must have been in connection with the religion of Vishnu also. Moreover, we find here that, in very early times, another idea more prominently brought to light in connection with another Vedic deity, Bhaga, came to be associated with the religion of Vishnu. That other idea is in fact the conception of god Bhaga as a bestower of auspicious blessings. This god Bhaga is perhaps an older god than even Mitra. God Bhaga appears to have had an Indo-European history. He was known to the ancient religion of the Slavonians, to the ancient religion of the Parsees, and also to the ancient religion of the Aryas of this country. As the bestower of auspicious blessings, Bhaga seems to have been very highly honoured and held in great reverence as a typical god. This word *bhaga* in later Sanskrit literature came to assume many meanings. It may now

mean the sun, but very frequently means good blessings and auspicious qualities and great powers. Thus the name of the sun-god, looked upon as a bestower of blessings and of auspicious powers, may easily be seen to have undergone a deterioration in meaning, so as to import not the god but the physical object symbolising the god, or those blessings and those powers whereof the god was originally conceived to be the bestower. When in this manner the earlier meanings of this word as the name of a god became almost forgotten among the people, the other later meaning naturally gained ground. It must be in consequence of an indentification of the god himself with the power of goodness that he possessed, that the word *bhaga* ceased to be the name of the god and came to denote chiefly his power of goodness and grace. After this took place, we observe a change in the structure of the name of the god: that name is no longer Bhaga but Bhagavat. This changed word means the possessor of those beneficent qualities and auspicious powers which have come to be represented by the word *bhaga*. In that way there arose a religion in which the worship of the Bhagavat was the chief element; and in it the Bhagavat came to be looked upon as the Supreme God. The religion which has been based on this worship of the Bhagavat is called the Bhagavata religion. It appears to be distinctly described in the *Mahabharata*. And even European and American critics seem to be fairly in agreement in holding that the *Mahabarata*, in its present form, must have been well known in

India not later than the 4th century before the Christian era. The *Mahabharata* is rightly conceived to be a work that could not have been produced at any one time by any one man. Although in the epic itself its authorship is ascribed to Vyasa, there is ample indication in it of frequent additions having been made to it in later times: and this sort of growth in size must have gone on with it for some centuries. If it is true that this growth reached its culmination about the 4th century before Christ, and if we have distinct references to the Bhagavata religion in the *Mahabharata*, then the worship of the Bhagavat must have been current for a fairly long time before that in India. That the Bhagavat may well be traced to the Vedic Bhaga is a point which does not seem to me to be in any manner improbable. There is some reason to believe that Sri-Krishna was probably the originator of the Bhagavata religion; and Megasthenes is considered to have been well aware of the prevalence of Krishna-worship in his days in North India. Now, if Vishnu and the Bhagavat are to be identified, as they seem to have been identified from very early times in this country, thereby Vaishnavism is naturally bound to become more comprehensive and to acquire a more expanded and more lovable moral meaning. Accordingly Vaishnavism came to mean in due time the worship of an all-pervading God, who is in the highest heaven, and is at the same time the bestower of all auspicious powers and benevolent blessings. Here, in this combined conception of God, we have the very heart, so

to say, of Vaishnavism. From this central idea arose all the later developments of this religion, as also all its later adaptations to the needs of progressive Hindu life.

In the same manner as Vaishnavism, Saivasm also may be traced to the Vedas—to the Deity Rudra so well-known in Vedic literature. Vishnu is a solar Deity in the Vedas, as I mentioned to you already. Rudra is therein conceived to be Agni—the fire-god. From the Vedic conception of Rudra as the god of fire arose Saivism, even as from the conception of the sun-god arose the later worship of Vishnu as the one Supreme God. Why did these later developments and modifications in religion come into existence in this country, one may very well ask. Why was there the gradual overthrow of the old Vedic religion of sacrifices, and why the introduction of the later religions based on the *Upanishads*, the *Itihasas*, *Puranas* and *Agamas*? That is indeed an interesting question to ask. The development of thought in Indian civilisation made it necessary that the old Vedic religion of ritualism should be superseded by another religion, which had more of real life in it, and was more capable of satisfying the religious needs and aspirations of the human heart, irrespective of all considerations of race, caste and social status. Nevertheless, this new religion could not be altogether new. In fact the progress of religion is so effected in the history of all civilizations that no new religion can be absolutely or unmixedly new. When a new institution or a new idea has to be

introduced among a people for their immediate benefit, it invariably happens that this new institution or new idea becomes implanted upon something that is really *old*. And the new *idea* or the new institution, growing in the midst of old surroundings, absorbs and assimilates a great deal of what is old from its environment: and in the result, the old and the new together sprout up in a new form so as to make the new product, viewed as a whole, more comprehensive, more beautiful and more helpful to the advancement of culture and character and civilization among the people. That is the way of progress everywhere. Whether we trace the origin, for instauce, of Buddhism or Christianity, or trace the course of civilization in China or Japan or France or England or India, we invariably find that new ideas and institutions grow in the midst of old environments and under the impulse of old forces which are still alive and actively in operation. We thus learn to see that every new growth is largely the result of the assimilation of much that is old with something that is new.

In the course of the development of the sacrificial religion of the Vedas, the influence of the priests at one time became so markedly preponderant that the gods themselves almost began to disappear from the vision of the sacrificers. And what loomed largely before their eyes was the performance of the sacrifice in accordance with the strict letter of the law. Another thing which also must have loomed largely was the rewarding of the sacrificial priests by the payment of

valuable *dakshina* or honorarium to them. To what extent such a decline of the true religious spirit took place may be made out from the fact that some of the later *Mimamsakas*, when dealing with the question of who the *Devatas* are, to whom sacrifices are offered, hastily dismissed the question itself by giving out that we need not at all trouble ourselves about who the *Devatas* are. They went quite so far as to say that the *Dèvata* is simply that thing the name whereof is seen inflected in the dative case in sacrificial formulas like *Indraya svaha* for instance. "Who is Indra?" is the question asked, let us suppose. The reply is— Don't ask who he is. He may be anything or nothing. He is simply that thing the name of which is here in this formula inflected in the dative case." When such an answer is given to such a question, we may at once make out what relative importance must have been attached to the question of who or what the gods are, as compared with the numerous and complex details of the sacrificial ceremonial. When mere sacrificial details become too much all-absorbing, all considerations regarding who or what the deity is, what its powers are, why we should worship it, were thrown into the back-ground. In fact these and other more interesting details bearing upon the question of godhood rapidly went behind the curtain. As all thought bearing upon the vital question of godhood in religion disappeared in that manner, what happened to be left behind was nothing more than mere form overloaded with numerous complicated and

unattractive details involving much useless expenditure of time, wealth and labour.

Naturally the common human heart would be prone to rebel against such a religion. There can indeed be no real life of any kind in an over-encrusted and fossilised shell of religion. There is nothing in it to touch the heart, and make it burn with the magic fire of spiritual fervour and moral emotion and sympathetic exaltation. It is too dry and too mechanical, too much of a sham to satisfy the deep religious longings of the aspiring and uplifted heart. In the early stages of its development Vedic religion was not like this either in its aim or in its practical use. From the very beginning it was indeed an earnest endeavour to rise from nature to Nature's God. In the hymns and prayers and chants addressed to the numerous nature-gods of the Vedas, a careful student may easily observe a growing tendency towards the realisation of what is sometimes called personal monotheism. The many gods of an earlier age become merged in the one God and are identified with Him: and this one God does not lose His divinity or His personality. Many consider that such a really divine and personal God has to be an essential element in all truly satisfying religions. Anyhow there must be for the common man in his religion something to grasp and to worship as a Supreme Power and Personality, who would lovingly come to help him in times of difficulties, and to whom he might with complete confidence surrender himself in all conditions of trial and sorrow and suffering. Religion has

even been defined as a kind of self-surrender, as the surrender of themselves which men make to a Higher Power, feeling unable to look after themselves in this world of troubles and turmoils—in this world, wherein even the most thoughtful man feels that he is blindfolded and tossed about without any aid from any really capable and truly knowing guide. Such a puzzling thing is indeed this world of ours! It is in fact so full of mystery and so full of pitfalls to the earnest and thoughtful man that he naturally feels that it would be good for him to seek and obtain the support of a Supreme Power, so that he may throw himself entirely on the mercy of that Power and derive unerring guidance from It, and take safe refuge with It, whenever necessary. It is very proper that this kind of feeling should come to the human mind most commonly and most readily, particularly in times of great danger and difficulty. When such a trying hour comes, how will the over-formal sacrifice, with all its elaborate details of ritual, help the aching heart of the man in trouble? How will the idea that the deity may be nothing other than what happens to be represented by the word, which is inflected in the dative case in a sacrificial formula, help him? You can all easily see that a conception of the diety, such as this, will give him no help, no support, no comfort. It is therefore very natural for the common man not to take into account the definition of the deity as given by these sacrifice-loving latter day *Mimamsakas*. He wants his God to be real, to be supernatural and transcendental, and to

be possessed at the same time of the requisite love and power to be ever near him and help him effectively.

In this way more than one of the prominent gods of the Veda began to be personally worshipped, otherwise than through the old over-formal sacrifices, gods such as Indra, Rudra, Brahma and Vishnu. We have enough evidence to indicate that many Vedic gods came to be so worshipped independently. In the course of this process some people chose one deity for their worship, while others chose other deities. Besides this, we have to take note of the fact that the Aryas who brought their Vedic religion and Aryan civilization into this land were new-comers from outside: and they were comparatively few in number. Before they came to this land, other people were dwelling therein whose language and civilization were different, and whose ideas and institutions were different, from those of the Aryas. These original inhabitants were, as far as we can make out with the help of available evidence—which is, however, hostile—a rather wild people who, nevertheless had a real civilization of their own, and had also an ordered social organization of their own. They were often found to be very powerful and clever in their conduct of affairs. Above all they had also a religion of their own, although this religion of theirs is declared to have been comparatively of a much lower kind than that of the Aryas. The religion that was then current among them is understood to have been characterised by the worship of the phallus, of serpents and trees and other things of that kind; and by rea-

son of the magic and witch-craft associated therewith, it appears to have been a primitive magical religion as well. These and other primitive elements of religion must have been found to exist among the original inhabitants of India, when the Aryas came in with their comparatively higher and more potent civilization. At that time these comparatively less cultured and less civilized original inhabitants could not of course grasp the meaning and aim of the Vedic chants and of the sacrificial religion of the victorious Aryas. And the Aryan priests, who were responsible for the proper conduct of the Aryan sacrifices, considered, as it was very natural in those days, that only the Aryan people were entitled to perform those Aryan sacrifices. So the sacrificial religion of the Aryas could not easily be made to spread among the non-Aryan inhabitants of the land. In addition to this the common human tendency of these non-Aryans in favour of a personally responsive deity must have to a noticeable extent told against the fatal completion of the sacerdotal process of ceremonial fossilisation in religion.

This sort of exclusiveness in religion is nothing very strange or very peculiar in the history of human civilization. Those of you that know anything about the religion of the Jews may remember that, till a very late period in the history of Judaism, it was an exclusive religion. It was a religion to adopt which the Jews alone were, by birth, entitled, but the Gentiles were not. Later on, however, the Jews also began to take in converts to their religion: they did not, how-

ever, allow these converts to enter freely the Holy-of Holies in their temple at Jerusalem. These converts were allowed to go only as far as the gate; and for this reason they went by the name of the Proselytes of the Gate. And even this became permissible, as I told you, very late in the history of Judaism. In the earlier stages of its history, Judaism was a rigorously exclusive religion. So also, if you go to the earlier history of Rome and of Greece, you will find there the same religious exclusiveness. The religion of the Latin tribes was distinctively exclusive. Nobody, who did not belong to any one of those Latin tribes, had any right to take part in the public worship which they conducted from time to time. Among the Hellenic people of Greece also, those, who did not by birth belong to the Hellenic fraternity, were not allowed to take part in their public worship. In fact, in connection with the development of every historically evolved religion, we find that at one time, in the early stages of its evolution, it must have been exclusive. And yet the exclusiveness of the sacrificial religion of the Vedas has been, in modern days, made the theme of much harsh criticism directed against the ancient Brahmanical priests of India. The chief complaint against these priests is that they managed to keep all higher religion and higher social privileges to themselves, and that the sense of human equality was smothered by them and kept away in the region of the improper and the impossible. This is an accusation based on ignorance in relation to the exact conditions of historic evolution in

religion. We have to bear in mind that, in the progress of human civilization, most early religions are characterised by exclusiveness at first. We generally start with the exclusive religion of the tribe; and this sometimes develops into the religion of a group or federation of tribes, which again may, under favourable circumstances, grow into the religion of a nation. In all these stages religion has to be largely exclusive; and it is only at last that we arrive at the universal religion. If we bear this great fact in the history of religion in mind, we may see at once how the bottom of this accusation against the ancient Aryan priests of India can be knocked off with the greatest ease.

Much of what I have said regarding early religious exclusiveness may look like a digression; but you will see that it is not without its bearing on the important question of the forces that gave rise to that universal religion, which has come to be known by the name of Vaishnavism. In the course of its natural development, religion in our country also became more and more universal; and with the growth of universalism in religion all distinctions of race, caste and creed had to disappear in the matter of men's religious eligibility for the attainment of the highest good of soul-salvation. I say advisedly that even differences of creed disappeared in this matter under the benign influence of the larger religious universalism in the country, because universal Hinduism has proved to be so comprehensively tolerant as to admit readily the title of all mankind for salvation, and to take away

from life much of the unwholesome bitterness of feeling generally arising from differences in religious creed and opinion. This is a point in relation to Hinduism which can indeed be very fully demonstrated to be true.

Here, I may, in passing, point out that even so early as the time of Vasishta and Visvamitra the sympathetic and expansive tendencies of liberalism seem to have struggled to come up in the sphere of religion in India. Visvamitra was a liberal seer, even as Vasishtha was a conservative sage, who wanted the Vedic religion to be confined solely to the Aryas. That Visvamitra desired even this religion to be made universal, seems to be borne out by the well known story of Trisanku. Whether you approve of this view regarding our ancient Aryan liberalism in religion or not, this much is clear, that in later times the sacrificial religion had, in spite of its having been more or less expanded and allowed to spread, largely to disappear, partly on account of its own over-luxurious and redundant growth, and partly on account of its notable unsuitability to satisfy the earnest cravings in the heart of man after a real, hearty and living religion. And when it thus naturally faded away, we find that three deities known to the Vedas came to hold a prominent position in the popular religion of the Hindus—Rudra, Vishnu and Brahma.

With this natural decadence of the overburdened Vedic ritualism and its many and multiform sacrifices, we observe two religious forces making themselves more

and more markedly effective and acting in consonance with each other in the evolution of further religious progress. The germs of philosophic speculation found in the Vedas grew rapidly and culminated in the production of our justly famous *Upanishads*: and the popular force in favour of the personal deity also asserted itself as against the weakened sacerdotalism of decadent Vedic ritualism. It is in fact as the result of the operation of these two forces that the idea of the Hindu trinity of gods came into existence, so as to serve well the demands of religious philosophy on the one hand, and the felt religious needs of the advancing popular mind on the other. When these gods of the trinity came to hold a prominent position in Hindu religion, even then the old spirit of the religion of the Vedas, that among the gods there is none higher and none lower, that each god as he is worshipped may well be looked upon as supreme—that spirit of *henotheism* as Max Muller called it—persisted among the thoughtful people: and with its persistence it was impossible for them to declare that any one was higher or lower among these three gods. In the meanwhile philosophy had, as I have already hinted, begun to produce more notable results than in the earlier days of the religion of the Vedas. I don't mean to say that in the Vedas we do not see the real beginnings of Hindu philosophy. It would be very wrong if I said so. On the other hand, there is ample evidence to show that potent germs of early philosophic thought are found in great abundance in the Vedas—particularly in the

Rig-Veda and in the *Atharvana-Veda*. That these germs should have grown well and produced large and highly valuable results is very natural indeed among a people so notably prone to be speculative and religious as the Hindus have been for centuries. The *Upanishads* are sometimes called the *Vedanta*, which means literally the end of the Vedas. If it is not thus literally interpreted to mean the last portion of the Vedas, it may be made to denote the aim or purpose of the Vedas, that for the attainment of which the Vedas seem to have steadily striven. Whatever the interpretation of the word *Vedanta* may be, we are able to trace in the treatises going by the name of the *Upanishads*, the sources of the later systems of Hindu philosophy known as the *Sankhya*, the *Yoga* and the *Vedanta* systems. Even Buddhistic and Jaina philosophy are held by some to be traceable to them. Those treatises themselves do not give any definite expression to any particular system of philosophy. They are not the work of one mind like the systems of modern philosophers, such as Kant, Hegel, Mill, or Spencer. Although not systematised as in modern philosophic works, the thoughts in them are strikingly luminous, often very piercingly and gloriously luminous. These thoughts take us to the farthest limit of all philosophy and impel us to go even beyond, and are expressed in language which is most enthralling and highly sublime. I believe my philosophic friends will support me, if I say that, after all, there is much deadening influence in system-making. As soon as we put together

our philosophic tnoughts into a system, there is a natural tendency for that system to lose spontaniety and originality and to become lifeless and hidebound. They lose their power to expand, and the germs of originality in them become crushed under the great pressure of the mechanical forces of systematisation. Luckily, therefore, for us, the authors of the *Upanishads* were not like modern philosophers: they did not endeavour to build up systems. They must have felt that their function as teachers was simply to give free expression to what they from time-to-time saw like seers. They left system-making to their later and weaker followers. That is why we have had in this country a profuse growth of pure and highly aspiring philosophy out of our *Upanishads*—of philosophy which has flourished in various forms and under various names, and has been systematised in various ways by various scholars and sages and saints.

Among the systems of philosophy that arose out of the luminous thoughts of the *Upanishads*, the very first was in all probability the *Sankhya* system of Kapila, which is considered by Brahminical tradition also to be one of the oldest systems of orthodox Hindu philosophy. Then came the *Yoga* sytem; and later on still, by combining, as I believe, the *Sankhya* aud the *Yoga* together, came the *Vedanta* system. And when these systematised philosophies began to flourish, they too had of course their part to play in shaping the growth of religion and in modifying the general conception of God among the people. I told you that,

in response to the inevitable cravings of the human heart, the sacrificial religion of the Vedas had to be set aside in favour of a religion wherein there was a God who was a real support to the worshipper, a God with whom the worshipper could take refuge, and from whom the worshipper could obtain love and help in times of trial and hardship. I also said that, among the Vedic gods, three came to occupy prominently the personal position which the human heart required that its gods should occupy: and these are Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. In the early days of the origin of this Hindu Trinity, the old henotheistic idea was evidently operating powerfully enough to prevent any such differentiation in rank among these gods, as later controversy brought into existence in later times so as to embitter the religious feelings of the Hindus very much. Such a differentiation in rank between Vishnu and Siva, for instance, we don't see much of, even about the time when our famous poet Kalidasa flourished. In dealing with these three gods, Kalidasa looks upon them as though they were very nearly equal, and shows no kind of partiality to any one deity at the expense of another, although there is very good reason to believe that he was himself a worshipper of Siva. When he happens to offer his prayers to Siva, he offers them as to the Supreme Deity; and when again he has to offer prayers to Vishnu, he offers them similarly as if to the Supreme Deity: and the language of philosophic description and praise he applies to Vishnu in one place is almost identical with the lan-

guage of adoration he applies to Siva in another place. And he honours Brahma almost equally with these two gods. But how long is it possible for this religion of the equal Trinity to go on unchanged? How can you have three gods, and consider each of them to be Supreme? It is inevitable for a question like this to arise after the mind begins to philosophise a little. If you do not philosophise—the god whom you for the time being consider to be supreme—your heart naturally goes forth in adoration to that god; and in his worship, you forget everything else. But if you philosophise, you are led to become more and more circumspect. In such circumspection there is both safety and danger: and philosophical circumspection made the later attitude of India one of inquisitive doubt regarding this equal position of the *Trimurtis*. What I have called philosophical circumspection made it in fact necessary that the assumed position of equality among the gods of the Hindu Trinity must be accounted for in some reasonable manner. Thus there was naturally an apportionment of functions to these gods; and all the three gods making up the *Trimurtis* were held to be different and partial manifestations of the one great God of advancing Hindu philosophy. Thus Brahma became the creator, and Vishnu the sustainer, and Siva the destroyer.

Why is that one of these gods came to be looked upon as creator, another as sustainer, and the third as destroyer? We have to note here firstly the effect of the germinal force underlying the ancient conception

of these gods. The word *Brahman* is often used to denote the Vedic prayer that is offered to Vedic deities. Such Vedic prayer has been personified as a deity, and declared to be powerful enough even to create. This conception of *Brahman* in the Veda resembles in many respects the Greek idea of the Logos. The relation between language and the meaning underlying language has played a great part in the development of Hindu philosophic thought, particularly in the matter of explaining the relation between the visible universe and the invisible reality that is behind it. Often enough we find Indian philosophers saying that the visible universe is something like the audible world of language; and that the invisible foundation of the universe is like the power of meaning possessed by language—the power of meaning which we cannot perceive with any of the senses. The relation between the word and its meaning has indeed been long held by our thinkers to be representative of the relation between the phenomenal universe and the reality which is behind it, forming its enduring basis and everlasting support. That is indeed one of the noticeable ways in which we find higher Indian thought growing, developing and expanding. Moreover, in Vedic literature, in the *Upanishads* in particular, we have it stated that the Creator willed, and thereby created the world. If you will, how do you give expression to your will ? You do so either by means of the language you speak, or by means of the deed you do. Hence the language, which gives ex-

pression to the will of the speaker, may well become identified with the will itself. And when the creating will is seen to be really responsible for the creation of the universe, we may very well maintain that it is the word, which gives expression to the will, that is responsible for such creation. Hence the expression बहु स्याम्, being representative of the will of the Creator, naturally came to be recognised as the immediate cause of the production of creation. If we understand that the idea underlying *Brahman* is distinctly that of the 'word', and if we also bear in mind the relation between the word and its meaning, as well as the relation between the will and the word which gives expression to it, we may very easily realise how natural it is for the idea of creation to become associated with the Vedic *Brahman*. Thus arose Brahma the creator in the Trinity; and philosophy also differentiated and assigned to him the function of creation.

Now how about Siva? He is, as you have been informed, the Vedic god Rudra, and as such the god of fire—Agni. This Agni as Rudra is declared in Vedic literature to have a *santta tanuh* and also a *ghoratanuh*—a form which is lovely and peaceful and a form which is terrific and fierce. In the fierce form which he has, we have to look upon him as a destroyer; and a destroying god becomes naturally the punisher of faithlessness and evil-doing. Such a god can be considered neither strange nor unwanted among the essential elements of a complete religion. In this universe of ours, we may see the processes of creation,

sustentation and destruction always going on side by side. We surely cannot think of the world as being at any time free from decay; if we could do that, the world would certainly cease to be what it is. I don't know if there is any poet who can command a sufficiently strong and clear imagination to portray the condition of the world as altogether unassociated with destruction and dissolution. If destruction disappear from the midst of the world, there would be no room in it at all for renovation. And will not most young men protest against such a situation? The stage of the world would then be quite fully occupied by very superfluous veterans; and when the world's stage becomes so overburdened with exhausted veterans, the young men can surely have no scope there for life and for growth. Naturally the condition of the world would then be very different—so different indeed as to be quite incapable of being consistently conceived. Destruction is thus an essential element in the universe as we know it. Whether it is possible to have a universe without destruction and decay therein, is a question which we deed not at present discuss; for we know only one universe, and there can be no good at all in troubling ourselves about the possibility or otherwise of another way of organising another universe. Let us take into consideration the one only universe which we know—that, wherein we have to live from day to day, even as we have to die when the hour for it comes: and this universe is characterised by decay and destruction. Destruction is as essential a part therein as

creation and sustentation are. Hence—to whom this essential function of destruction is to be assigned—is a question which philosophy has every right to ask. And the fierce Rudra as Siva came to be recognised as the most competent god to take upon himself the responsibility for performing this function of destruction in the universe.

Then there is the work of sustentation to be performed and looked after in the universe. Some god must take care of that work. With the idea underlying the conception of god Vishnu, there came to be the association, as you know, of the idea of the Bhagavat. There had thus come into existence the conception of a god as an all-pervading source of light and life, of a god who, occupying the supremest position in the universe, is ever helpful to mankind as the bestower of beneficial powers and gifts and blessings on them. As Vishnu became such a god, it was quite natural that he was made responsible for looking after the work of sustentation in the universe. In the midst of the birth, decay and death, which are everywhere evident in the universe, we also see that things endure in a more or less marked condition of steady well-being for shorter or longer intervals of time. It is this endurance of things in the condition of comparative well-being that has been designated as sustentation. And the god, who has to look after such a function of sustentation, must obviously be a god of love. The creating god Brahma has merely to deal out the barest justice to all beings in accordance with the law of *karma*. The

importance of this function of Brahma in the universe cannot at all be gainsaid; but his function is not designed to make him a suitable object of either religious fear or religious love. In the manner in which the fierce Rudra became quite appropriately the destroying god and an object of religious fear to his worshippers, Vishnu became equally appropriately the protecting god and an object of religious love to his worshippers. Siva, as the austere god of fear and unrelenting rigour could easily become Mahadeva or the 'great god' among the people. But Vishnu alone could be always *Santakara*, full of peace and benignity, so as to love his worshippers and be really loved by them in return.

In this way the functions of the three gods of the Hindu Trinity became distributed among them. At any rate I can offer no better explanation of why Brahma became the creator, Rudra the destroyer, and Vishnu the protector. Old Vedic tradition and comparatively later philosophic thought thus gave rise to the religion of the *Trimurtis*. This religion was, however, from the very beginning lacking in the element of finality even for the time being, as its three gods were looked upon as mere functional aspects of the one only God of the universe, the God of all gods. It is the tendency of the aspiration of religion to look up always, and to endeavour to rise to higher and higher levels of worship and realisation. Therefore, after conceiving the one only God of the universe, in whom there has to be the natural and final synthesis of all the other gods, the heart of the worshipper cannot be

at ease, if he is ever called upon to worship any being who is in any manner less than the sublime and almighty fulness of his one only God, the God of all gods. Siva and Vishnu, who had already become popular gods, rose under this impulse to represent the one only God of true philosophy, inasmuch as popular imagination and its predilections and prejudices would not very naturally be in favour of the adoption of an entirely new deity to represent this one only God of philosophy. Indeed Saivism and Vaishnavism appear in this light in the *Mahabharata*, although we cannot fail to notice therein a very marked tendency in favour of looking upon Vishnu as the one only God of true philosophy. It is true that our great poet Kalidasa was not a narrowly sectarian bigot in his worship of Siva as the Supreme God; but we cannot therefore say that he was unaware of Vaishnavism as an independent religion in which Vishnu happened to be the Supreme God. By the time the gradual growth of the *Mahabharata* came to its end, Saivism and Vaishnavism had already assumed their distinctive shapes, and had come to be accepted among the people as different forms of one and the same religion derived from the same scriptural and philosophic sources.

In the meanwhile, that is, in the interval between the grand climacteric of *Upanishadic* thought and the culmination of the age-long growth of the *Mahabharata*, a new force of great significance came into existence in the religious and social atmosphere of Indian civilization; and that is none other than the

momentous force of Buddhism. Buddhism was really a revolt against the overdone sacerdotalism of the Vedic sacrificial religion of the Brahmins. Probably it was also a revolt against the aristocratic isolation of the Brahminical priests and their monopoly to serve as the clergy, that is, as authorised teachers of religion and philosophy. When a revolt against any established order of institutions is started, it is found, in the history of all countries and civilizations, that the revolt as revolt invariably goes too far. Indeed the process is comparable to the oscillation of the pendulum in this respect: men first go to one extreme in one direction, and then they go to the other extreme in the opposite direction. Since Buddhism operated as a revolt againt the excesses of Brahminical sacredotalism and clerical monopoly, Gautama the Buddha tried to establish beyond doubt that he was as much entitled to be a teacher of religion as any Brahmin born, and taught that the mechanical religion of over-formal ceremonialism and life-taking sacrifices does nothing more than merely cause unjustifiable injury to innocent animal life. He felt sincerely that such a religion cannot purify a man's life, cannot satisfy the deep spiritual longings of his heart, and cannot make his life's burden of sorrows and sufferings lighter or his hope of final freedom and salvation surer and more cheerful. In accordance with the tendency of the age, the Buddhistic revolt itself had to be based upon and guided by philosophic speculation; and the philosophy on which it was accordingly based is now recognized by most scholars

to have been derived from the luminous and inspiring thoughts contained in the *Upanishads*, and probably also from some of the later systems of philosophy built up with their aid. We have both *Sankhya* and *Yoga* elements in Buddhistic philosophy, and also a large number of ideas and doctrines directly traceable to the *Upanishads*. The most notable feature in Buddhistic philosophy is that it does not cause men to trouble themselves about the question of the final philosophic reality. It does not ask—"Is there a God, and if there is, what is His relation to the universe?" This aspect of philosophy, Buddhism purposely ignored. It started with the proposition that life in this world is ever full of sorrow and pain and misery, and that to get out of such a life of grief and pain and misery once for all, so as to go back to it no more, has to be the chief purpose of life—its very *summum bonum*.

How is this purpose to be accomplished? The problem is one of practical ethics, and its solution was found out to be in the annihilation of *trishna*—of the thirsting after the pleasing objects of the senses and the agreeable delights of life. It is this *trishna* or thirsting after the pleasing things of life which is declared to be really responsible for the bondage of life—I won't say, for the bondage of the soul, because the question of the soul appears to have been left undecided in Buddhism. If we get rid of this *trishna*, we get rid of bondage; and then we become free. And what becomes of us when we so become free. We attain *nirvana* as the Buddhishts say. But Buddhis-

tic *nirvana* is not in all respects the same as the Hindu salvation of *moksha*. On the attainment of *nirvana*, man's continuously recurring mundane life of pain, sorrow and misery—of birth, growth and decay and death—is declared to disappear altogether. What there will be after all this misery disappears, Buddha does not want people to enquire into and examine. His ideal lay altogether in practical ethical life. "Look to the ethical life, don't waste your time in vain metaphysical wranglings regarding the nature of the *Brahman* or the destiny of the soul"—he is known to have declared more than once. Whether the soul is real, whether it is something separate and apart from or the same as God, he did not care to consider. These discussions are, after all, such as cannot lead to anything like really final and irrebuttable conclusions. Indeed we cannot satisfactorily solve these metaphysical problems and give to their solutions the character of finality. Philosophy would cease to be philosophy if there were to be real finality about all its conclusions: and Buddha obviously thought that this absence of finality made metaphysical discussions useless for the practical guidance of life. There may or may not be a *Brahman*, and this *Brahman* may or may not be related to the universe. We may or may not have a soul that remains and endures even after the attainment of *nirvana*. These problems were to him practically insignificant. His concern evidently was to free human life from the net of over-wrought metaphysics as much as from the redundant overgrowth of

ritualism, and to make it practically pure, blissful and serene. Such is a brief statement of the more important aims of Buddhism. You may see here how, in his revolt, Buddha went to the other extreme. It is true he has not denied God. He has not denied the soul either. But he has distinctly told all those that seek guidance from him that there is no good in trying to solve problems about God and the soul, and that ceremonial worship and sacrifice as elements of religion and aids to conduct are very much worse than meaningless mockery.

That is how Buddha's work came to figure in the field of Indian religion, and he naturally interfered with the even progress of old Hindu thought. He had therefore to be met. After Buddha, his followers laboured with exemplary zeal to make his religion spread. Although they took much sincere and earnest trouble, their work, like that of all propagandistic workers, made them indulge rather freely in that kind of low activity, in which their chief aim turned out to be not so much to spread the good teachings of Buddha in regard to the necessity of making human life here on earth pure, unselfish, holy and helpful, as to see that other religions were subjected to harsh criticism and were made to lose their influence in the world. They, therefore, freely found fault with the ancient Vedic religion of the Hindus. Some of the old criticisms of the Buddhists are even now repeated by other modern critics of Hindu religion and Hindu scriptures. The attempt to meet these criticisms in

earnest gave rise to a religious revival among the Hindus. In the case of this revival of Hinduism also, the process was indeed like the oscillation of the pendulum. When Buddhism went to one extreme, the Brahminical revival went to the other. When Hinduism started afresh to assert itself against Buddhistic opposition, it was the *Mimamsaka* who at first came forward to vindicate the Hindu religion. He relied upon and worked for establishing the infallible authority of the Vedas. According to him the Vedas are self-produced and eternal, they are not the result of any inspired vision of any seer, they are not even revelation which is limited in time; but they are eternal and self-existent, they have always been and will ever be. With the aid of such an eternal, self-existent and infallible Veda, it was his aim not so much to establish any form of theistic ethics and rational religious worship, as to resuscitate the nearly dead ritualism of the old Vedic religion with its many and multiform sacrifices. That was the position which the *Mimamsaka* held. It was on this ground that he took his stand against the Buddhist. But we know that such a position, resting solely upon the eternality and infallible authority of the Vedas, cannot be made to tell effectively against the purely ethical practical position taken up by the great humanitarian teacher Buddha. When the argument of the *Mimamsaka* against his Buddhistic critics could not thus have the desired effect in rehabilitating Hinduism, then there arose the necessity of meeting philosophy by philosophy and ethics by

ethics. This could be done quite easily, because the human heart cannot go on for ever in pleased satisfaction with a religion that does not take God into consideration, and does not take the soul and its final destiny into consideration. The religion that entirely relies upon a more or less empirically determined discipline of ethical conduct in life, must be, from the very nature of the case, an unsatisfying religion. My learned and esteemed friend in the chair will, I am sure, corroborate me when I give expression to the view that the true foundation of all enduring ethics has to be found in metaphysics. That ethics which is not founded upon metaphysics is certain to be shaky ethics. That is what I understand all true philosophy to teach. That is also what the human heart evidently feels from its very bottom. It is all very well to say that our lives must be pure, and unselfish and sinless. But why should they be so? We are all prone to know the better and do the worse. As St. Paul has put it, there is a double nature in every one of us. There is a certain something in us which always prompts us to do that which is right and good; and there is also a certain something else in us which prompts us to do what is not right and good. Between these two prompting forces in the heart of man—there is a struggle going on incessantly. If, in the course of this constant struggle, the force prompting us to do the right is not supported strongly by religion and by philosophy, then naturally the force which prompts us to do the wrong will overpower us and make our lives altogether faulty and unworthy.

Even with the aid of the support derived from the helping hand of philosophy and religion, do not so many of us give way before the force which always tempts us to do evil ? Therefore this purely ethical, and agnostic and empirical religion could not satisfy all the religious cravings of the human heart. It could not uphold religion and morality so sufficiently or so completely rationally as to make them stand on their own legs and enable us to declare with the unfailing authority of reality that the life of righteousness is alone for ever and ever the proper life for man.

Accordingly, it became necessary that the religion which strove from a theistic standpoint to counteract the agnostic influence of Buddhism, should address itself to the work of making the authoritative commandment and justification of morality and unselfishness *more satisfactory than Buddhism could ever prove them to be. The work of the Mimamsakas* in establishing the divine authority of the Vedas and their everlasting character could not, as we have seen, give rise to this result. And so something else had to be done to bring about such a result, and thereby establish the high value and worthiness of Hindu scriptures and Hindu tradition in vindicating morality and in satisfying all the high spiritual requirements of religion. This work had necessarily to be done; and it was taken up by Sankaracharya in right earnest. That such was the need of the hour had been made out by the famous Gaudapadacharya even before the time of Sankara. Indeed Gaudapada had already

succeeded in formulating a scheme of thought whereby the humanitarian ethics of Buddhism might very well be evolved out of the *Upanishadic* metaphysics of Hinduism. Many of us are not conscious of the manner in which we are hour after hour moulded by our environments; and often enough we feel that we are absolutely free agents in all that we think and do. But if we carefully examine the processes of history with a view to find out why it is that in one and the same country the leading men of one age think in one manner, while those of another age think in a different manner, we are sure to find out that there are natural forces which tend to produce such variations in thought and aim. It is in consequence of these forces that they think and act as they do in history. If we bear this well in mind, we may quite easily discern how very unconsciously Gaudapada and Sankara must have adopted the line of reasoning they did, for the purpose of over-coming the unwholesome sceptic effects of the agnosticism of the Buddhists. One of the chief ends to be gained in this conflict was the establishment of the authority of the Vedas, which meant the same thing as the establishment of the authoritativeness of the old long-cherished religious thoughts and traditions of the country. Another such object was to derive that same purity and sinlessness and selflessness of life, as was advocated by Buddha, from the teachings of our old Vedic and Vedantic religion. These are indeed among the practcal historical results of the philosophical doctrines taught by Sankaracharya.

During his all too short a period of life, his thoughts as a philosopher and his work as a religious reformer produced very marked and momentous results. While accepting the *Mimamsaka's* views regarding the eternality and infallibility of the sacred scriptures of the Hindus, Sankara had to contend against his exaggerated faith in the sacerdotal ceremonialism of the Vedas. There is very good evidence to show that he fought this fight with very remarkable success. On the strength of the eternality and infallibility of the Vedas, he had further to establish that the agnostic ethics and humanitarianism of Buddhism, though very high in their then moral value, were really inferior to Vedantic ethics and Vedantic humanitarianism. How well he accomplished this, the later history of Buddhism in India abundantly demonstrates. In the course of his endeavour to re-establish Hinduism unshakably on its ancient foundations, he of course worked most nobly and heroically for purity as well as unity in human life and human society.

If he had lived longer he might have given us much more of the treasure of his thoughts, and might have enlightened many more dark corners in the great field of Indian philosophy and Hindu religious aspiration. And yet, what he did in the short span of his life is more than enough to immortalize him a thousand times. His great success in carrying out the object, which he obviously had in view, is evident from the fact that his teachings put an end to the effective opposition of Buddhism against Hinduism, and pro-

moted in a notable manner the forward progress of Hinduism along the lines of a highly improved ethical universalism. His object was evidently to win back those pious and earnest and thoughtful people, who had strayed away from the old fold of Hindu religious tradition and Hindu philosophic thought. Consequently Sankaracharya's religion had to be based on the philosophical foundation of the higher pantheistic monism; and it thus became pre-eminently the religion of *jnanin.* His teaching is, as you know, that the Supreme *Brahman* is identical with the soul, and that everything in the phenomenal universe is an illusory manifestation of that *Brahman* who is in fact the one only reality. Such being the position of Sankaracharya, he had naturally to propound highly metaphysical problems and theories, and had to prove that the soul is in fact a part of this one great reality in the universe, and that becoming absorbed into it in the end is indeed the great salvation of *moksha.* When that aim of becoming absorbed into *Brahman* is accomplished, souls get out of the bondage of *samsara* at once and as a matter of course; and in this state of *moksha,* every soul comes to its own enjoyment of unlimited light and eternal bliss and peace. It is not difficult to make out how these teachings of his tend to give a firmer and more rational metaphysical foundation even for Buddhistic ethics. In this we have the greatest historical achievement to be placed to the credit of Sankaracharya. He saw, and made others also see distinctly, that the moral fruits of pure Buddhistic life

were more fully capable of being derived from Vedantic Hinduism. When this became evident, how could Buddhistic critics decry any longer the old religion of the Hindus with justice? When before Sankaracharya the *Mimamsaka* had worked effectively to establish the eternal and infallible character of the Vedas, and when Sankaracharya later on demonstrated the high ethical value and humanitarian purpose of the teachings contained in those same Vedas, the position of the religion of the Hindus, as found upon their ancient scriptures, became altogether impregnable. It certainly cannot be amiss to point out here that there is very good evidence in the writings of Sankaracharya to indicate that he was himself an ardent Vaishnava: he may well be made out to have been a great Bhagavata. Although his achievements in relation to the great work of strengthening the philosophical fortifications of Vedantic Hinduism have been comprehensively general and non-sectarian in character, it is abundantly clear that he must have felt that his higher pantheistic monism was in no way seriously incompatible with Vaishnavism even in its form as the accepted religion of the ancient Bhagavatas.

It has, however, to be observed that the large body of the Hindus in the country could not easily comprehend Sankaracharya's Vedantic religion, since it was too philosophical for the common human mind. The common man could not indeed derive sufficient religious satisfaction from it. His need even then was to have a God who would love him, who would come

to help him and render protection unto him whenever he got into difficulties—a God at whose feet he might throw himself unreservedly so that He in His divine wisdom might do with him whatever He chose. The sense of man's dependence upon God, his instinct of love to God, and his felt need for an always unfailing divine support could not be easily satisfied by the sublimely impersonal God of Sankara's pantheistic monism. What wonder, if soon afterwards there arose among the people the desire to see where else they could obtain their religious satisfaction? The old religion of the Hindus was distinctly marked by the supreme dominance of a loving and saving divine personality in it. Even before Buddhism there was, as it appears, the religion of the Hindu Trinity. And after Buddhism lost its great influence in India, the popular position of Vedantic Hinduism became very highly improved. This religion had by that time been proved to be in no way inferior to Buddhism or any other religion, in the matter of establishing the obligatoriness of pure ethical conduct as based on sinlessness and selflessness in life. And yet the need was felt for a personal God, and for a more emotional and less intellectual religion than that of Sankara. This more emotional and less intellectual religion had in fact been known well to the people of India before. Such a religion is clearly traceable in the pages of the *Mahabharata* and in the *Puranas*. And after Buddhis and Sankaracharya, this old emotional religion was felt to be more and more wanted. Accordingly religious

reformers arose and came forward to supply the felt need of the hour. Among those who so arose in India to give this needed emotional turn to the re-established and freshly progressive Hindu religion, Ramanujacharya certainly played a very important part, and produced very notable results as a fearless and faithful worker in the field of Hindu religious and social reform. There have been others who also endeavoured in their days to do this kind of work; but among all such, Ramanujacharya may be made out to have been undeniably the most famous and fruitful worker. Ramanujacharya had, of course, his predecessors, who had prepared the way for him, as the history of the Sri-Vaishnava religion distinctly shows. And in carrying out this requisite reform in Hindu religion, that is, in making it a religion of loving devotion to an all-powerful and all-merciful God, what Ramanuja mainly did was that he combined the old religious views of the Bhagavatas with the Vedantic ideas of Sankara's higher pantheism, so as to make his *advaita* or absolute non-dualism become *visishtadvaita* or qualified non-dualism. Ramanuja's aim was evidently to emphasise the religious value of devotion and service and self-surrender to God, but not to make the realization of the oneness of God with the soul of man and with the universe the basis for moral conduct, and the means for the attainment of the sublime salvation of *moksha*. The need for moral conduct, for purity, for sinlessness, and for selflessness in life has been believed in and proclaimed by all great

religious teachers in India as in every other part of the world. But they have differed as to the question of how this sinless life is to be realised in practice. Is it to be made dependent upon spiritual and philosophical realisation, or is it to be made dependent upon the culture of the tender and benevolent emotions, has in fact been the practical problem at issue. There can be no doubt that both the processes are capable of yielding the fine fruit of pure and noble conduct. However to most men and women the culture of the emotions happens to be easier than the achievement of spiritual and philosophic realisation.

Ramanujacharya accordingly declared *bhakti* to be the most suitable means to achieve purity, sinlessness, and selflessness in life; and hence this same *bhakti* was according to him the truest and the most unfailing means for the attainment of the salvation of *moksha*. The emotion of *bhakti* is said to be a feeling akin to love; it is indeed deep devotion and love. Even in our common daily life, we may very well realize what a potent factor love is in encouraging morality, and in establishing purity and selflessness and sinlessness in life. Imagine a young man who is entirely absorbed in himself, who does not care to think of anybody or anything other than himself,—imagine further that, either as in India or in the fashion of Europeans, he marries a beautiful and worthy damsel, and becomes day after day more and more attached to her in love. Suppose this young man of the above description goes to the Bangalore fruit-market and sees rows of fine

luscious fruits exposed for sale there. His mouth of course waters, and he buys some choice fruits among them. Does he eat them himself? He would probably have done so in those old self-centred days of his uniquely single blessedness. He does not and cannot do so now; for his love to his wife is so true and so deep that although at the very sight of the fruits his own mouth profusely watered, he carries them home to his wife and gives them to her in preference to himself. And if in course of time he becomes the father of a number of children, and then goes again to the same market and sees similar fruits, his mouth probably will not then water at all. He will have by that time become too much of an altruist, that is, too much of a true lover of others, and his mouth will surely have learnt not to water on seeing even the best of fruits. Nevertheless, he is certain to buy the fruits, in the belief that those fruits will be even more delicious and agreeable to his children than they were to him in those old days when his mouth freely and fearlessly watered in his own interest at the sight of the sweet fruits. He buys them and takes them home. To whom does he give them now? Evidently not to his wife, who is now to him no more than the worthy and respectable mother of his dear children. But he gives them to the children. This clearly shows how potent love is in expanding our sympathies and in killing our selfishness. And by killing selfishness, we in fact kill all that is calculated to encourage sinfulness and impurity in us. With the disappearance of selfish-

ness, every temptation that tends to make our lives unrighteous and faulty disappears at once. In this way love may be made out to be a very potent factor in giving rise to purity and unselfishness in life. If this feeling of love is steadily and carefully cultivated in the human heart, if it is made to find its object not merely in the wife and the children, but in that great Being, who is the very life and foundation of the universe, and from whom comes all that is good and true and beautiful in the universe, if that Being is made the object of our love, then there will arise, as they put it in Sanskrit, *anuragadviragah*—that is, through intense attachment to that divine Being, there will arise in us absolute non-attachment to ourselves.

This idea is sometimes illustrated in Hindu literature by taking the example of an uncontrollable illegitimate attachment which a man may have to a mistress, although he is morally bound to bestow on his own wedded wife all his love and attachment. As his illegitimate love grows in intensity, that is, as the object of his illegitimate love becomes more and more dear to him, his lawfully wedded wife may be seen to be discarded by him more and more. Thus his *viraga* or want of attachment to the wedded wife bears an inverse ratio to his *anuraga* or loving attachment to the illegitimate mistress. This example is not a very happy one morally: nevertheless as an illustration it is very telling. And what I want you to understand from it is, that, if we make God the object of all our attach-

ment, then everything else ceases in time to have the power of attracting our love. With the growth of such a full God-love in us, our love of pleasure, of wealth, of beauty and of power disappears like mist before the rising sun. The only love that then endures is our love of God. And the full import of this God-love depends upou our conception of God. If it be realised that everything that is in the universe has come from Him, and in due time goes back to Him—if such is the conception which we have of God, then, when He becomes the object of our love, all His creatures also become the objects of our love as a matter of course. How will it be possible for us to live a life of selfishness, when God and all his creatures have thus become the objects of our true and devoted love? Such a thing is indeed impossible. We cannot love God and His creatures sincerely, and love also at the same time our own sweet little selves. The love of man's sweet little self fades away in the larger presence of the love of God and His creatures. Here, therefore, is an efficient and worthy means placed at the disposal of man, by which he may overcome his tendencies in favour of selfishness and sinfulness—and that means is man's loving devotion to God, which is in Hinduism known by the name of *bhakti*. Here also *anuraga* or loving attachment to God and all His creatures gives rise to *viraga* or the feeling of non-attachment in relation to one's self. It is not merely that love expands our sympathies and kills our selfishness: love indeed does more—it stimulates in us self-sacrifice and impels us

to wear ourselves away cheerfully in serving those whom we love. Our love of God—when it is indeed real and hearty—is fully capable of turning us into earnest and sincere servants of all His creatures. In fact it is in serving His creatures that our love of God finds its satisfaction and makes itself alive and visible. And it is actually maintained in the Sri-Vaishnavism of Ramanuja that to love and honour and serve the Bhagavatas is even more meritorious than to worship the Bhagavat. Loving devotion to God has been and is undoubtedly a great moral force in human history.

Thus with the aid of *bhakti* we may annihilate selfishness, and thereby realise *moksha*. The obligatoriness of *bhakti* is, therefore, an unfailing authority in favour of pure ethical conduct and high nobility of purpose: it is indeed an unfailing means to help us always to attain real success in living the righteous life. Moreover it is easier for us to command *bhakti* than to obtain that transcendental spiritual wisdom and the realisation of the unity of reality which Sankaracharya's philosophy demands of all its followers. The tendency to love is altogether natural and is implanted in the heart of all persons. There is in fact no person of any kind who has not a natural aptitude to love and to be moved by love. The only point to be attended to in respect of this natural emotion of love is to make it expand so widely and so comprehensively that it may have the great God Himself and all His creatures for its object. And the tendency of love to have itself lavished upon the beloved is very frequently seen to be against the

conception of absolute oneness between the lover and his beloved. The function of philosophy consists largely in realising the untiy of reality, while that of *bhakti* or the emotion of God-love and divine devotion is in the realisation of union through service and self-sacrifice. When it is found that the path of *bhakti* leads the devotees of God more easily and more naturally to the attainment of *moksha* through the realised relation of God-union, than the path of wisdom or *jnana* does through the realisation of oneness with God, then as a matter of course the easier path of *bhakti* will be followed by many so as to make it become the really popular road of religious aspiration and attainment. Ramanujacharya, whose aim obviously was to make as many as possible come under the saving influence of God-love as comprehended in Vaishnavism, made *bhakti* the basis of all religious life; and to him *jnana* itself came to mean the same thing as *thakti*. In fact it is in this light that he has interpreted the *Vedanta-Sutras* of Badarayana. Accordingly, making *bhakti* as before the pivot of popular religion was one of the most important points in the life-work of Ramanujacharya. It is fully worthwhile nothing here that the Sanskrit words *bhaga*, *bhagavat*, and *bhakti* are all of the same origin etymologically; and it cannot therefore be an altogether unfounded assumption to hold that the word *bhakti* must have, almost from the very commencement of its religious history in the Sanskrit language, meant the means of worshipping Bhagavat in the spirit of true love and devotion as the one

Supreme Lord, the God of all gods. There is other evidence also to prove that the doctrine of *bkakti* is undoubtedly an ancient element in the religion of the Bhagavatas. Anyhow there can be no doubt that the all-pervading and all-enlivening Vishnu, who, as Bhagavat, is the loving bestower of all auspicious boons and blessings, and is, as Narayana, the abode of all life and the internal controller—*antaryamin*—of all beings, is most appropriately approached through *bhakti*. The most glorious delight of love is ever in experiencing the response of love to love. Therefore to a loving God, what can be more delightful than the confident and trustful love with which His devotees respond to His love? And is not Vishnu, the bestower of light and life and of all auspicious boons and blessings, a loving God? When we think of our own unworthiness to be the objects of His love, and contrast it with His infinite benevolence and the immense value of all His divine gifts, how can we conceive Him to be other than a realy loving God? On the certainty of His all-merciful and omnipotent love is based another doctrine of the Sri-Vaishnavas, which is closely allied to the doctrine of *bhakti* and may even be said to be a natural development of it. I refer to the doctrine of *prapatti* or absolute self-surrender to God, which is also spoken of sometimes as *saranagati*. This doctrine of self-surrender is based mainly on the last teaching given by Sri-Krishna to Arjuna in the *Bhagavadgita*, and it is hence held to be as authoritative as the *Gita* itself. I told you a little while ago that there are some

modern philosophers also who maintain that man's sense of dependence on a higher power has to be an essential element in all religions. Whether it really has to be so or not, we need not discuss now. But it is evident that the doctrine of *prapatti* is based on such a sense of dependence on God—a dependence which is complete and unquestioningly trustful. Ramanuja's views regarding this doctrine come out most beautifully from his *Saranagatigadya*, which is a highly pathetic prayer in Sanscrit prose embodying his great faith in God as his sole refuge and only Saviour.

There is another point in the work of Ramanuja in connection with Vaishnavism, which is brought prominently to view by the name Sri-Vaishnavism, which has been given to the religion he taught and upheld. It is sometimes called Vaishnavism of the *Sri-sampradaya*. Ramanuja's religion has been called Sri-Vaishnavism, because Sri, that is, the goddess Lakshmi, is made to have an important function to perform in it. When man, by means of his *bhakti*, endeavours to attain *moksha*, it is found that he often feels helpless and hopelessly forlorn on account of his knowledge of his own culpable unworthiness to be blessed with the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment as also on account of his very natural conception of God as a just and impartial apportioner of the fruits of *karma* to all His creatures. When we deal with a great question of religion and morality like the fitness of God's creatures to be saved and lifted out of the thraldom of *samsara*, and base its solution on our

metaphysical conceptions of God and of the will of God, we cannot help thinking of Him as a hard task-master, who is systematically bent upon seeing that all His commandments are duly obeyed by all His creatures, and that His will is always honoured by them as law. With such an absolutely just God, who is very rightly and very naturally apt to become deeply disappointed with us whenever we violate His commandments, our chances of attaining salvation are indeed infinitely small. When we calmly measure our own capacity to conduct our lives in complete consonance with the will of God, the result is certain to fill us all with great despondency. Since the moral law is based upon the will of God, we are all bound to live our lives in accordance with the moral law. But when the weakness that is in us unnerves us and we become a prey to temptations, how can we then manage to live the life that is morally faultless? And if we break down under the heavy pressure of trying temptations, are we thereafter to have no hope of any kind regarding the attainment of the bliss of soul-salvation? In this manner we are led to face the old problem of how the mercy of the loving God may be reconciled with the strict impartiality of the absolutely just God. It is in a situation like this that we naturally feel the need for the kindly interposition of a suitable intermediary between us and our great God,—an intermediary, who on the one hand is willing and able to excuse our faults and can on the other hand effectively approach our almighty God with the petition for mercy in

behalf of His weak and erring creatures. It is not here in India alone that the help of such an intermediary has been sought by pious and God-fearing people. Other religions also than this Sri-Vaishnavism seek and postulate an interceder between God and man, between the ever-just and almighty God and the weak and erring human being, so that this weak and erring being may be made to have the full benefit of divine mercy. Some make their religious *Guru* such an interceder; others, like the Christians, make a divine incarnation serve as such an interceder; and Sri-Vaishnavism looks upon Lakshmi, the divine Mother of the Universe, as such an interceder. To bear well and without harm the burden of moral and religious responsibility belonging to weak and erring mankind, some such interceder between the judging God and the human beings to be judged is very rightly recognised to be necessary by more than one well-known religion. Now in the religion taught by Ramanujacharya, this interceder is, as you have been already told, the goddess Lakshmi. The conception of Lakshmi as the divine consort of Vishnu is also an old one in Hindu religion. It is known to ater Vedic literature, and has a philosophical meaning underlying it—this meaning being nothing other than the true representation of the relation between *prakriti* and *Parama-purusha*. *Prakriti* is conceived to be the wife of God, who is the Supreme Being. According to what is called by some *Pauranika Sankhya*—which is the same as the *Sankhya* of Kapila, with the exception that, in the *Pauranika Sankhya*, a Supreme Soul

is postulated anu made to have the same relation to the universe as a whole as the various individual souls have to their repective embodiments—according, to this *Pauranika Sankhya*, it is maintained that *prakriti*, which is in fact the source of the created universe, is obedient to the will of the Supreme Soul and gives birth to the universe in consequence of His close association with it. Hence *prakriti* is looked upon as the wife of God and the Mother of the Universe. Both Vaishnavism and Saivism have recognised the appropriateness of this conception of the relation between God and Nature; and in Saivism we have *prakriti* and *Parama-purusha* even blended together in conception of the *Ardhanarisvara*—the God who is represented as half man and half woman. If we understand that Lakshmi represents in Vaishnavism the power of *prakriti*, we may easily make out the meaning and fitness of the function assgned to Her in Sri-Vaishnavism. Even according to the *Sankhya* of Kapila, *prakriti* is conceived to undergo all her modifications with a view to liberate all bound souls from their imprisonment in matter, and is for this reason compared to a kind and loving mother. In *Pauranika Sankhya*, Mother Nature happens thus to be the obedient and loving consort of Father God. Please note here that the feminine gender of the word *prakriti* in Sanskrit has not been without its influence in making Nature the kindly Mother of All, even as God is the great Father of All. Looked at in this light, what does the propitiation of Lakshmi really signify? It

means this—that before we succeed in propitiating our God who is above and beyond Nature, it is necessary for us to propitiate Nature, if we are indeed anxious to get on well in life as well as after life. Those who want to live their lives happily and harmoniously for themselves and for others have to see that they do not foolishly violate the laws or oppose the irresistible forces of Nature. Hence the propitiation of the powers of Nature is always required in our own interest. Our ancestors of thousands of years ago achieved marked progress in religion by passing from Nature to Nature's God. In Ramanuja's *Visishtadvaita* philosophy, the oneness of the ultimate reality is not the result of any form of essential identity, but is based upon an organic union of the component entities making up the reality. Hence according to him the path of philosophic ascent is inevitably from Nature to Nature's God. And the function of mercy-seeking intercession in behalf of weak man, which is assigned in Sri-Vaishnavism to Lakshmi, the merciful Mother of All, enables us to see further that, in Ramanuja's view, the path of religious realisations also is in proceeding from Nature to Nature's God.

When philosophy taught our ancient sages how to anlyse the universe, and their constructive imagination led them to conceive the relation between God and Nature to be like that between a husband and his wife, it became perfectly natural for Vaishnavism to make Lakshmi the wife of Vishnu and the merciful Mother of the Universe. You know that the progress of religions takes

place not unoften by the infusion of new ideas into old institutions. A great Arabic scholar writing about the religion of the Semites pointed out some years ago, with many examples, the tendency that there is in human societies to conceive their divinities almost unconsciously in the light of their own social organizations. If we have a community of people whose society is matriarchal in organisation, and among whom the mother is, therefore, the most prominent person in the family, their most natural conception of the deity happens to be as a goddess. They look upon the high supernatural being or beings at whose hands they seek sympathy and support as a mother. In other communities wherein the social organisation is patriarchal, where the father is the most authoritative figure in the family, the divine being is looked upon as a father. This state of affairs in human civilisation is indeed very well-known to students of anthropology. And we are able to make out with various kinds of evidence that the Dravidian people of South India possessed in the early days a matriarchal organisation of society, that among them the mother was accordingly the most important figure in the family, and that consequently the worship of the village goddess as *amman*—that is, as mother—came to be very prevalent among them. If we have a people among whom goddess-worship is prevalent, and if we want to introduce in their midst a newer and a higher religion, it turns out to be necessary to find a real place for a great goddess in that newer and higher religion. This was probably one of

the reasons which led to the enthronement of Lakshmi in the religion of Ramanujacharya as the world's Merciful Mother, who is the ever-loving and ever-successful mediatrix between Her Lord God and the individual souls seeking the salvation of a perfected re-union with Him. Ramanuja's predecessors in the line of Sri-Vaishnava teachers had already given a prominent place to Lakshmi in their religion, probably because it happens to be a characteristic feature of Sri-Vaishnavism that it arose in the Tamil land and obtained its fresh nourishment largely from the inspired thoughts and sentiments of certain well-known Tamil poets and saints. The thought-influences proceeding from these poets and saints were taken up by Brahminical teachers, and were woven into the philosophy of Vaishnava Vedanta in a very remarkable manner. Such a mutual in-weaving of pious poetry and sublime philosophy is probably not seen in the literature of any other religion. The Sri-Vaishnavas often speak of their sacred literature as *Ubhaya-Vedanta*, that is, as a double Vedanta consisting of the Sanskrit philosophic Vedanta and the Tamil poetic Vedanta. And the association of Lakshmi or Sri with Vishnu as the intermediary between weak man and almighty God must also have been postulated in this manner in response to popular needs and influences; and it led to various consequences. Thus it is in all probability that Vaishnavism became here a religion in which Mother Lakshmi has to intercede for mercy between God and His children. And who are His children? All mankind—nay, all living beings.

If all mankind happen to be His children, and if Mother Lakshmi intercedes between weak and suffering mankind on the one hand and almighty God on the other, we can easily understand how in this religion none can be kept out of the Holy of Holies, and none can be looked upon as unworthy to receive the grace of God. If out of a family of a number of children, a mother keeps away any one child from sharing the kindly and merciful favour of the father, she certainly deserves to be characterised as an unnatural mother. Therefore in this religion there is an all-comprehensive divine graciousness which knows no exclusion. The reciprocity and the universality of divine and human love, as known to this religion, has in no small measure been the result of the Mother of All being made in it to intercede between God and all His children so as to temper His serene justice with tender mercy.

I have thus tried to indicate to you in a very brief outline the position occupied by Ramanujacharya in the development of Sri-Vaishnavism in our country. Vaishnavism, when adopted by Ramanuja, had already become Sri-Vaishnavism. In it the old Bhagavata doctrine of salvation through *bhakti* had been reasserted and developed beyond into the doctrine of *prapatti*. The decision to utilise the *Ubhaya-Vedanta* to Sanskrit philosophy and Tamil Vaishnava poetry as the basis of Sri-Vaishnavism had also been arrived at and practically carried out to a large extent by the predecessors of Ramanuja. Accordingly he was in no

sense the pioneer of the popular religious movement out of which Sri-Vaishnavism arose in South India. He may be said to have come on the crest of the wave of this movement; and it received its final seal of authority and rational sanction at his hands. That he secured for it the full support of the Sanskrit Vedanta, and proved it to be a worthy means for the exaltation of the social virtues and the uplifting of the masses, is abundantly demonstrated by the events that filled his long life of courageous conviction and enduring sincerity and comprehensive humanity. Let me refer in illustration of this to the single instance of his having admitted the *paraiyas*—the *holeyas* as you call them here—as worshippers into the famous Vishnu temple at Melkote, which is, as you all know, situated within the Mysore State. The humanity and the courage involved in this noble act are both highly remarkable, and worthy of the enfranchising religious movement which attained its consummation through his work. After him others carried the stream of Vaishnava thought in various ways into various parts of this holy land of ours; and new forms of Vaishnava faith came into existence under new conditions. But these are matters which cannot be included within the scope of the persent lecture. The popularisation of the ideas of the Fatherhood of God, the Motherhood of Lakshmi, and the Brotherhood of Man in India is indeed in a notable degree due to Ramanuja and his work in life; and it is now a fact of history that to him may be traced more or less largely the beneficent religious influences that

have proceeded from Ramananda, Kabir and Nanak. So far, Ramanuja's work in connection with the immemorial and ever progressive religious life of India has shown itself to be like the work of the prescient sower who sows good seeds in good soil : and we may therefore feel well assured that, under the quickening stimulation of the heavenly light of God-love, the harvest of the love of man to man as man will in due time be quite abundant and full of further hope and further promise in this our ancient and historic country, wherein he lived so well and laboured so nobly.

APPENDIX.

THE ALLEGED PERSECUTION OF THE JAINS BY VISHNUVARDHANA AND RAMANUJA.

BY

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That it is impossible that either Vishnuvardhana or his successors could have sanctioned any such thing, is borne out by a number of incidents in their history. It was from the royal residence at Melkote that Vishnuvardhana makes a grant to the Saiva temple, at Chamundi Hill. He does receive the 'holy food' presented by the Jains after the consecration of the Jinalaya at Halebid and directs the God being named Vajaya Parsvanatha in honour of his victory. He honours Sripala Trividya Deva (the Jain controversialist) and even appoints him tutor to his children. It was about this time that the Vira Saiva (the so-called Lingayat) sect comes into prominence, so that in the course of the century Jainism was subjected to the simultaneous attacks of the Vaishnavas from the South and the Virasaivas from the North. The manner in which the Hoyasals—rulers and ministers alike—dealt with these rival sects is a supreme instance of their religious policy from which more modern rulers might learn lessons of wisdom. The minister of Vira Narasimha, by name Polalva Dandadhisa, founded the temple of Harihara, the image in which has the form combined of both Siva and Vishnu, thereby to indicate that there is actually no difference between the two. This achie-

vement of a Vaishnava minister in reconciling the two opposing sects is a unique instance of a breadth of view in religion, which is hard to be found elsewhere at the time.

This was the feat of one of a class of persons, rulers and ministers, who had been devoted Vaishnavas. Vishnuvardhana after his conversion, perhaps through the course of his career, built temples dedicated to Narayana—at any rate endowed them richly,—such as Vira Narayana at Talakad, Vijaya Narayana at Belur, Kirti Narayana at Bannur, &c. In his progress through his dominions he had taken pains to enquire into the condition of these and other foundations, and saw that they were restored to their former position of eminence as places of worship. He did not in this show any partiality to one sect or the other. His general Gangaraja and his Jain wife Santala Devi, endowed Jain temples equally with his sanction as the several donations to Jain temples by this general and other Jain devotees would show. This example was followed by his successors, whether they were Vaishnava or Saiva, for some of them were of the latter persuasion also.

Thus then it is clear that in the matter of religion this Vaishnava Constantine Vishnuvardhana, as the disciples of Ramanuja took delight in calling him, was far from being a sectarian. No attempt was made at any uniformity of religious belief and the policy of the rulers was the most liberal that could be imagined.